

RUSSIA RESISTS



By the same Author:

SOVIET DEMOCRACY
RUSSIA WITHOUT ILLUSIONS
RUSSIA, FRIEND OR FOE?
HOW THE SOVIET STATE IS RUN
RUSSIA IN PEACE AND WAR

RUSSIA RESISTS

by

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PREFACE

THE greatest battles in human history are now raging. These battles will decide the future of Humanity. It is not easy to write about them while they are in progress.

The war has created difficulties in the printing industry. This book goes to press, and nobody can say for certain when it will be in print. In the meantime many events may take place that alter the emphasis of various aspects of the struggle.

But to refrain from writing, because of these practical difficulties, would be to shirk the issue. Already the titanic battles on the Eastern front provide a thousand lessons. We must note these lessons, learn from them, utilise them for our own part in the joint campaign against the Nazi foe.

Therefore an attempt has been made, while citing actual examples, to treat the subject in a way which will not "date." True, by the time the book reaches the reader, many better examples to illustrate the general theme may be available. The reader must himself learn the lesson of such examples, on the basis of what he has already read in this book.

History does not wait for the writers of it. But no writer to-day is justified in waiting rather than writing. This book summarises the lessons up to the seventh week of the German-Soviet war. For what occurs later, the reader must interpolate his own comments. It is sincerely hoped, nevertheless, that most of what is written here will prove to have more than temporary value in helping to interpret and to determine the march of events.

CHAPTER I

THE BLITZ THAT FAILED

ON June 22nd, 1941, the biggest armed assault in history was hurled by Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union. All along the 1,800 mile front, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, the Nazi armies launched their attack. The crack Panzer Divisions were in the vanguard, they were ordered to reach Kiev and Smolensk within a week; Moscow and Leningrad within a month.

But why, if he refrained from undertaking this bold enterprise in 1939, did Hitler risk it in 1941, when the Soviet Union was undoubtedly much stronger?

The answer is given in Hitler's speech of June 22nd. In this speech he explains that there was no other possibility.

True, Germany was at war with Britain. It would have been most desirable first to defeat Britain, to appropriate the resources of the whole of the British Empire, before risking an attack on the Soviet Union.

But how to defeat Britain?—That was the question. And Hitler has explained that it was impossible because of the policy of the Soviet Union, which continued steadfastly to build up its own defences in the East.

Here are Hitler's words of June 22nd:

"While our soldiers, from May 10th, 1940, onwards had been breaking the power of France and Britain in the West, the Russian military deployment on our eastern frontier was being continued to a more and more menacing extent . . .

"Thus came about . . . the tying up of such powerful German forces in the East that the radical conclusion of the war in the West, particularly as regards aircraft, could no longer be vouched for by the German High Command."

From these words it is clear that Hitler, though desirous of invading Britain, felt unable to do so because of his fear of the

U.S.S.R. in the East. Therefore, to defeat Britain, the smashing of the menace of the powerful Red Army in the East was essential. Therefore the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union took place because there was no other possibility open to the rulers of Germany. Fear of the Soviet Union was the primary reason. Fear of the growing opposition in Nazi-occupied territory was a further consideration.

There was, however, a hope in the minds of the Nazi leadership that some arrangement might be reached with Britain and U.S.A. on the basis of a common anti-Soviet front. The significance of Rudolph Hess's flight to Britain can only be fully understood in this connection. Here are the facts as broadcast over the B.B.C. by President Benes to the people of Czechoslovakia:*

"Why have Hitler and Nazi Germany committed this final act of madness?

"In the last six months, leading Germans, including Hitler, Goering, Hess, Brauchitsch and others, gained the conviction that they could no longer defeat Britain. Differences and disputes arose among them as to what to do. These gave rise to the flight to this country of Rudolph Hess, who already, six months ago, had tried to come into contact with certain British quarters in the hope that they would convince the British to stop the war, the prolongation of which would mean the fall of Germany. Here in England he admitted this quite openly.

"These German quarters were specially anxious to stop the war before the United States entered it. In this Hess was not successful. The Germans decided that they could not be certain of Russia's attitude, and they thought that Russia must be defeated at any price before the allied offensive they expect next spring."

Thus, the Nazis apparently decided to attack the U.S.S.R. in the hope that they would win allies in Britain and U.S.A., rather than invade Britain knowing that there was no hope of enlisting as an ally the powerful forces of the Red Army in the East.

* Reported in *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, June 27th.

And the hopes placed upon certain circles in Britain were not without some foundation.

The reception received by Rudolph Hess in this country is evidence that certain circles were ready to welcome him as a popular hero. He was portrayed in the Press as a "curly-haired, blue-eyed" hero. He was called "sincere" and "idealistic," because of his consistent policy of hatred towards the Soviet Union. It appears that Hess might have been openly welcome in official circles, if the masses of the people had not reacted very strongly against this pro-Hess propaganda, and thus forced a change of tune.

The fact that Hess's arrival in this country was also kept a secret bears out this theory. His landing was first announced by Berlin: Hess had gone mad and flown to Britain. Only then did the Ministry of Information announce that Hess had landed in Britain and was not mad.

Finally, the fact that to this day no detailed statement has been made by the Government suggests that, in high places, there were not a few people who were ready to discuss Hess's terms, to return to the friendship of 1939, friendship with Nazi Germany on the basis of a Nazi attack on the Soviet Union.

However, fortunately for the peoples of the world, Hitler's friends in Britain were too weak to turn the scales.

No sooner had the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union been announced than Mr. Churchill came to the microphone, and in a dramatic broadcast declared that the British Government would render all possible assistance to the Soviet Union:

"Any man or State who fights against Nazidom will have our aid. Any man or State who marches with Hitler is our foe. . . It follows, therefore, that we shall give whatever help we can to Russia and to the Russian people.

"We shall appeal to all our friends and allies in every part of the world to take the same course and pursue it, as we shall, faithfully and steadfastly, to the end.

"We have offered the Government of Soviet Russia any technical or economic assistance which is in our power and which is likely to be of service to it."

Hitler's political *blitz* had failed. Hitler was faced, at long last, with a war on two fronts.

But the idea of Soviet Russia as an ally was not welcome to some of those in high places in Britain. Russia is not an ally, only an "associate," was a common formula at the beginning.

These word-spinners were sharply rebuffed, however, by Mr. Churchill. Speaking in Parliament on 15th July, 1941, he said:

"The Agreement which has been signed, the text of which has been published, cannot fail to exercise a highly beneficial and potent influence on the future of the war. It is, of course, an Alliance, and the Russian people are now our Allies."

This was followed by the formal signing of an alliance between Britain and the U.S.S.R. in the war against "Hitlerite Germany."

At long last Britain and the U.S.S.R. were allies in the full sense of the term. At long last the Nazi rulers of Germany were faced with the fate they had always feared most—a war on two fronts.

Even then, however, the Nazi rulers still had hopes of success. Even though certain friends in Britain were not powerful enough to influence policy immediately, would not a speedy victory over the Soviet Union bring them to heel?—Could Britain hold out if Russia fell?

Clearly, in Mr. Churchill's view, the position of Britain would be serious indeed if the Nazis were able to succeed in the East:

"He wishes to destroy the Russian power because he hopes that, if he succeeds in this, he will be able to bring back the main strength of his army and air-force from the East and hurl it upon this island, which he knows he must conquer or suffer the penalty of his crimes. His invasion of Russia is no more than a prelude to an attempted invasion of the British Isles. . . .

"The Russian danger is therefore our danger and the danger of the United States, just as the cause of any Russian fighting

for his hearth and home is the cause of free men and free peoples in every quarter of the globe."*

If Hitler could rapidly defeat Russia, Britain's turn would come next. And if Russia, with the largest mechanised army in the world, could not resist the force of the Nazi attack, what would be the fate of this island?

Hitler's blitz on Russia was aimed at taking the Russians by surprise and at scoring a speedy victory. True, a temporary military advance was achieved. Vast areas of Soviet territory were occupied, but at a great cost. And whereas Kiev and Smolensk were to have been occupied within a week, the plan failed. Whereas Moscow and Leningrad were to have fallen within a month at the outside, the plan failed. The Nazi rulers had landed themselves in a war on two fronts, and neither front showed any signs of caving in as previous fronts had done, in Poland, in France, in Greece, in Yugoslavia and in Crete.

Why, it may be asked, did the armies of the Soviet Union allow the Nazis to take the initiative, to penetrate so far into Russian territory?—Surely if they had taken the initiative themselves when, say, the Nazis were occupied in Greece, an entirely different outcome would have been the result?

Speaking on July 3rd, Stalin answered this question in some detail:

"What has Fascist Germany gained and what has she lost by treacherously tearing up the non-aggression pact and attacking the U.S.S.R.?

"She has gained a certain advantageous position for her troops for a short period, but she has lost politically by exposing herself in the eyes of the entire world as the bloodthirsty aggressor. There can be no doubt that this short-lived military gain for Germany is only an episode, while the tremendous political gain of the U.S.S.R. is a serious and lasting factor that is bound to form the basis for the development of decisive military successes for the Red Army in the war with Fascist Germany."

* Speech of June 22nd, 1941.

First, the U.S.S.R. has proved to the whole world its peaceable intentions.

Secondly, inside Germany itself, Hitler's position is far weaker than would have been the case if the Red Army had attacked. The experience of the Soviet-Finnish conflict made clear that, even in the case of fascist governments, masses of people can be won over for a "defensive" war who would take an entirely different view if their own government was clearly playing the part of an invader of foreign territory.

Thirdly, if the Red Army had invaded Nazi-occupied territory, even at a time when it would have lessened the pressure on our own forces in Greece, would not this have aided Hitler in his pose of "Saviour" of Europe against the "menace of Bolshevism"? Could the British Prime Minister under such conditions, whatever his personal views might have been, have declared: "I see the Russian soldiers standing on the threshold of their native land guarding the fields their fathers have tilled from time immemorial?"*—Would we not have had the admirers of Nazism declaring "We see the people of Poland, Germany, Hungary, Rumania, standing on the threshold of their native lands, guarding their hearths and homes from Bolshevism?"

If, by allowing the Nazi rulers to launch the first blow, the Soviet Union thereby diminished the popularity of Hitler's anti-Soviet war within Germany; and if, further, it thereby won the sympathy and support instead of the hostility of the British and American Governments, together with tens of millions of people in all countries, then indeed the immediate military sacrifice will have been accompanied by lasting political gains.

These considerations, together with its genuine desire for peace as long as possible, explain the fact that, though confident in its own military strength, the Soviet Government did not launch the first offensive.

As a result of this deliberate policy on the part of the Soviet Union, perhaps the Nazi rulers obtained a false impression of the present strength of the Red Army. Maybe they thought the Soviet Government considered itself incapable of waging

* Speech of 22nd June, 1941.

a successful war against the forces of the Nazis. At any rate, they launched their offensive expecting a speedy victory. Their confidence was misplaced. Their military *blitz*, like their political *blitz*, failed.

After six weeks of fighting they were being held all along the line: before Smolensk, a hundred miles from Leningrad, eighty miles from Kiev. Though Smolensk was later taken, a vital blow at Nazi "invincibility" had been dealt.

The Nazi radio had to explain away the failure to advance: the German soldiers were having to fight against "an enemy superior in arms". "The peculiar tactics employed by the Soviet defence required that the German High Command should also change its tactics."—Such were the announcements of Berlin Radio six weeks after the fighting commenced.

(The *blitz* had failed.

—And how did it come about that Soviet Russia, a country of backward peasants and illiterates only twenty years ago, a country whose armed forces had been generally deprecated in the British Press as recently as February, 1940, was capable of holding the formidable attacks of this mighty foe?

Partly, because the military preparations of the U.S.S.R. were thorough. For many years they had prepared for this. They were well fortified against any manner of surprises.

Partly, because the people of the U.S.S.R. can fight and do fight with a determination unparalleled in previous history. As the *Times* has said: "The Russian soldier is fighting with the same endurance as he fought twenty-five years ago, but with greater skill and initiative, with far better equipment, and with a more acute sense of the issues at stake."*

And as the *Daily Telegraph* has said: "The Russians . . . are showing in their rank and file a courage that is impressing everyone. They have, most surprising of all, a vast fund of individual initiative to draw upon."†

These are vital factors which we must fully understand in order to pass a correct judgment on the nature of the present historic struggle, on the failure, for the first time, of the Nazi tactic of the *blitzkrieg*.

* Leading Article, 14th July, 1941. † *Student of War*, 7th July, 1941.

CHAPTER II

"A STATE OF FIGHTING PREPAREDNESS".

FOR many years the Government of the Soviet Union has been building up the defences of the country in anticipation of a possible crisis. And since August, 1939, the Soviet leaders have never let the people for one moment forget the danger of a surprise attack of the kind which actually took place on June 22nd, 1941.

Speaking on August 1st, 1940, Molotov warned his Soviet listeners by reminding them of Stalin's words: "We must keep our entire people in a state of mobilisation and preparedness in the face of the danger of military attack so that no 'accident' and no tricks of our foreign enemies shall catch us unawares."

And on May Day, 1941, less than two months before the Nazi onslaught began, Marshal Timoshenko, speaking as Commissar for Defence, reminded his listeners: "The international situation is very tense and fraught with all kinds of surprises. Therefore the entire Soviet people, the Red Army and Navy, must be in a state of fighting preparedness."

A general index of this "state of preparedness" is the Soviet defence budget which rose enormously from 1939 to 1941. Far from regarding the non-aggression pact with Germany as a guarantee of permanent peace, the Soviet Government knew that such a pact would be violated by the Nazi rulers if ever it suited them, and therefore they made the most use of the respite to increase their budget expenditure on defence.

In 1935, just before Hitler told Lord Londonderry that the U.S.S.R. had the largest army, air force and tank corps in the world, Soviet expenditure on defence amounted to eight thousand million roubles. By 1939, the figure had been raised to forty thousand million roubles, five times the figure for 1935. It was at this stage that the Nazis signed their non-aggression pact with the U.S.S.R.

In 1940, the Soviet budget provided for an expenditure of fifty-six thousand million roubles on defence, and in 1941, it provided for seventy-one thousand millions. Thus, in the first eighteen months of the second world war, the U.S.S.R. had provided for a further increase in its defences by some seventy-five per cent. This was all done before the Soviet Union had actually been drawn into the war.

The state of preparedness of an army depends on four main factors: Manpower, training, equipment, and morale. The first is dependent to some extent on population. The other three factors are all subject to control.

First, with regard to man-power, the U.S.S.R. has quite the largest armed force in the world. Every year it can call up 1.5 million young men for two years' compulsory military training. Usually, prior to 1936, it called up about 800,000 of these. The Red Army to-day can therefore call on twelve to fifteen million trained men, not including the technically trained reserves. In the second part of 1936 it was announced that 130,000 pilots were to be trained, which shows the scale of the air force preparations.

It should be noted that, with regard to *population*, both Nazi-occupied Europe and the British Empire have a larger number of males of military age to call upon. Therefore, on the basis of population alone, disregarding politics, Hitler could draw upon a larger, not a smaller, man-power than the Soviet Union. His policy of national oppression, however, makes this in practice impossible.

Secondly, with regard to the training of these men. In two years it is possible to transform the raw recruit into a skilled operator of both simple and complicated arms. And the Soviet Union has led the world in the mechanisation of its armed forces.

If we consider such a simple matter as rifle-shooting, accurate marksmanship has been a strong point in the Red Army for many years. Thus, at the International Small-Calibre Shooting Competition, held in London in 1937, and at which 212 teams took part from twenty-eight countries, a Soviet team took first place. In the following year Soviet teams took the first six places in a similar competition.

If, on the other hand, we consider such a highly-skilled job as driving a modern tank, it is worth remembering that in the U.S.S.R. there are tank drivers who have had an experience of 2,500 miles of driving. In face of this fact, it is not surprising that, in writing on the collapse of France a Soviet military expert should have expressed the most profound horror at the fact that some of the French tank crews had never actually driven a tank for more than three hours on a road before being sent into battle.

In the air, where training was already raised to three years before the war, there is a similar thoroughness. Among the instructors are the Soviet crack airmen, men who have flown over 600,000 miles, taking the Arctic in their stride.

Since in the Red Army there are no class or income barriers coming in the way of promotion according to ability, every member of the ranks can rise, not only to the highest non-commissioned rank, but through a military academy to the commissioned ranks. All training at the military academies is free of charge, all ranks are paid according to their status, and there is no assumption, as in the British Army, that officers shall have an unearned income.

In 1935, there were 16,000 full-time students in the military academies of the U.S.S.R. The military press referred to hundreds of thousands of reserve officers as compared with less than 50,000 under Tsarism. The French one-time Minister for Air, Pierre Cot, wrote of these young officers as follows in "L'Oeuvre" in February, 1935: "They are young. They work hard. Their intellectual activity is remarkable. Everywhere throughout the Red Army we found laboratories, workshops and technical equipment for independent work which aroused our admiration. There is nothing similar in our officers' training schools in Paris, Lyon or Marseilles."

Since the Finnish campaign (December, 1940—February, 1941) special attention has been paid to the training of the lower commanding personnel. It is of course natural that, in an army where no social barrier exists, ability should tend to rise to the top. In contrast, in the British Army, there is a remarkable concentration of ability at the rank of sergeant,

including all those good soldiers who for reasons of their social background or financial position cannot hope to continue to ascend the ladder to the holding of a commission. In the Red Army there is no such bottleneck. The result was that ability tended all the time to rise, and the quality of the non-commissioned ranks suffered to some degree as a result. The work put in since the Soviet-Finnish conflict must have done much to correct this fault.

Secondly, since the Finnish campaign, and with the experience of the war in the West ever before their eyes, the Red High Command laid down the principle that all training must henceforth take place under conditions as closely as possible resembling those of actual modern warfare.

Prior to the Nazi assault, this method had been in operation for about a year. The new recruits had most of their exercises in the field. There were frequent night alarms, long marches, and nights spent in snow-covered fields as in a real winter campaign. Almost the whole day was spent out of doors, and compulsory cold showers were introduced first thing in the morning to harden them. In spite of initial doubts, this regime proved highly conducive to good health.

When on tactical exercises, the officers and men have had to build their own living quarters out of local materials; and all of them have had training as cooks so as to be able to prepare their own food at the front. Ski-ing has been introduced for all units, and the Red Army man has had to be able to feel at home on skis in all possible conditions, reconnoitring, patrol, and going into action.

Training of the three arms, infantry, tanks and the air force, has always been taken as one whole, in order to obtain complete co-ordination between their movements.

And what has been the state and quantity of the equipment at the disposal of this Red Army?

Much speculation was rife concerning the equipment of the Red Army prior to the Nazi attack of June, 1941. During the Finnish campaign the most harrowing accounts of the Red Army's equipment appeared in the British Press. "I was told that one Finnish pilot brought down six Russian bombers

in five minutes," reported the credulous Mr. Noel Baker, M.P., on his return from Finland. Or, to take another example, the *Daily Telegraph* solemnly announced that "the incompetence of the pilots is believed to be the biggest difficulty of the Russian Air Force. . . . Their low standard of education is shown by the fact that multiplication tables have been found in every plane brought down."* Or this: "Russia's shock troops are well equipped and clothed, but they are followed by a ragged army. Their uniforms are dirty and shabby, 1914 rifles are carelessly slung over their shoulders, and their oversized boots are mostly of canvas."†

These quotations are not reproduced out of malice, but because they throw some light on the appalling ignorance of the British people concerning the real state of affairs in the Red Army until the Nazi attack commenced. Only when the U.S.S.R. was actively engaged as our ally did the truth concerning the Red Army for the first time reach the British public through the Press.

On land, in the air, and at sea the Soviet Union has excellent equipment. Most of it is the product of the years of Planning, starting with the First Five Year Plan in 1928.

Already in 1936, more than 1,000 tanks simultaneously took part in the Red Army military manoeuvres. Colonel Martel, a member of the British Delegation, made the following comment in an interview with *Pravda*:

"The fact that only very few tanks were compelled to fall out on account of mechanical defects, and that there were no air accidents and no forced landings inspires us with respect for your tanks and aeroplanes." According to Captain Liddell Hart, in the *Defence of Britain*, "our military mission to the Russian manoeuvres in 1936 was much impressed by the performance, as well as the quantity, of the fast light-medium tanks which the Russians had evolved from the American Christie. It seemed a very suitable basic pattern of 'cruiser' tank for our own purposes."

The Red Army did not display its newest equipment at such manoeuvres. It is therefore not surprising that the Germans had some nasty surprises waiting for them. "The

*16th January, 1940. † *Daily Herald*, 4th December, 1939.

Germans have hitherto belittled the effectiveness of the Russian tanks", wrote the *Times* on August 4th, 1941, "but this week-end they describe them as being of remarkably good quality and as formidable opponents, especially the large 52-tonners and giant moving fortresses of 120 tons."

In 1935 German experts already put the strength of the Red tank corps at 10,000. By 1938-9 this must certainly have been increased to at least 20,000. The seventy-five per cent. increase in the defence budget in the following two years must have been reflected to a substantial degree in the further enlargement of the tank corps.

The efficiency of the Red tanks steadily increased together with their numbers. Comparing 1939 with 1934, Voroshilov gave the following figures:—The fire-power of the Red tank troops was increased almost fourfold over this period. No figures are available of further advances in the next two years, but even if the previous rate of progress were not exceeded, a very substantial development must have taken place. It is worth noting that in 1936 German experts referred to the Red Army as having 1,500 heavy tanks of thirty and thirty-three tons. Tanks weighing 100 tons, and with a speed of twenty-five miles per hour and a crew of eight to ten were mentioned already in 1939. The 120-ton tanks, described in recent German communiqués, are possibly a later development of this model.

Speaking in March, 1939, Voroshilov gave a series of comparative figures for the fire-power of Red Army units and corresponding French and German units. These comparisons are well worth bearing in mind, for the rate of progress of the Red Army since 1939 has certainly not been allowed to lag behind that of the preceding period.

Voroshilov said: "The aggregate artillery salvo of a French rifle corps (consisting of three divisions) is 6,373 kilograms; that of a German rifle corps of the same composition, 6,078 kilograms. The aggregate artillery salvo of a Red Army rifle corps is 7,153 kilograms. . . .

"Further, the weight of shells that can be fired per minute by the rifle corps mentioned is: French, 51,462 kilograms, and

German, 48,769 kilograms. Our rifle corps can deliver 66,605 kilograms of metal per minute.

"If we add together the weight of shells, mines, rifle grenades and bullets that can be delivered per minute, we get the following figures:—

French corps	..	..	..	60,981 kilograms.
German corps	..	..	..	59,509 "
Our corps	..	..	..	78,932 "

In the case of cavalry, Voroshilov reported a fifty-two per cent. increase in the period 1934-1939. In the case of artillery, an increase in heavy artillery of eighty-five per cent. was reported, medium artillery twenty-six per cent., light artillery (not counting anti-tank guns) thirty-four per cent. The number of howitzers had risen by eighty per cent.

Perhaps the most sensational achievement of the Soviet armed forces in the first period of the war was the defeat inflicted on the Nazi attempts to bomb Leningrad and Moscow. In the case of Leningrad, in spite of its nearness to the frontier, all attempted raids were successfully driven off. In the case of Moscow, out of some 200 planes, not more than ten or fifteen were able to get through in any single raid. This fact, which sharply distinguishes the Soviet cities from those of all other European countries, London and Berlin included, suggests that Voroshilov was not exaggerating when he announced in 1939: "Anti-aircraft guns have increased by 288.3 per cent. The quality of the anti-aircraft guns has also improved; for example, the ceiling of fire has increased by sixty per cent.

"As you know, the air defence of our important state centres and cities is based on the co-ordinated action of anti-aircraft guns and fighter planes. Parallel with an improvement in their co-ordination, there has been an increase in the number of fighter planes by 142.3 per cent."

This brings us to the air force. The total number of planes, announced Voroshilov, had considerably more than doubled between 1934 and 1939. The horse-power of the air force had, however, more than trebled. The proportion of heavy bombers to the total air force had been doubled, and the proportion of fighter planes had increased by two and a half times. The

total Soviet Air Force in 1934 could carry a load of 2,000 tons of bombs in one flight. By 1939, it could carry 4,160 tons in a single flight. The fire-power of the machine guns of the Red Air Force had increased four-fold.

In *Aeronautics* (June, 1941) a careful and detailed study of the Red Air Force is published, by H. J. A. Wilson. The writer concludes that the U.S.S.R. possessed at least 9,000 planes in 1939, and that already by 1936, according to German data, approximately seventy-four plants had been built capable of turning out from five to eight thousand machines annually.

As to the quality of the machines, the author's comment is as follows:—"About new machines which have been reported from time to time to be in service—for instance, six new fighters and bombers were shown in August, 1940, at the Tuchino aerodrome to foreign air attaches—details are not available. This lack of information has given much room for heated controversies between pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet publicists

"The war in Spain proved that the Russian fighters and bombers when properly handled were anything but easy victims for the German and Italian fighters. Pilots of the Legion Condor praised the manoeuvrability of the Russian single-seat fighters. The construction of a single-seat fighter for the Luftwaffe with features similar to the Russian I-16 was reported recently which seems to indicate that the Germans appreciate the Russian fighter very highly.

"The workmanship of the Russian machines has often been criticised, and it has been repeatedly stated that at least half of them were unserviceable at a given moment. Major Kukkanen, of the Finnish General Staff, seems to have made different observations. He stated in a survey of Russian air operations during the Finnish campaign—published in a Swedish military journal and quoted by the semi-official German *Militär Wochenblatt*, of August 30th, 1940—that the Russian machines had been good and that very seldom technical trouble was encountered resulting in a forced landing

" . . . opinion about the efficiency of the personnel is

divided. German military observers in Spain and China reported very favourably about the courage and skill of the Russian airmen, but thought that they were specially chosen crews. Similar observations were given from the Finnish theatre of war, where especially the pilots of the Northern Air Force units were highly praised."

As to the Russian capacity for innovation, it should not be forgotten that the whole technique of parachute warfare was of Russian origin, copied by the Germans, and used by them against less wary nations. On the other hand, however, it is notable that the parachute technique, when attempted by the Germans against the U.S.S.R., has been a failure.

The above facts prove that, prior to being drawn into the war, the U.S.S.R. had built up a very powerful air force over a considerable period of years.

Until the time of the Spanish war, naval development had tended to lag behind. True, the U.S.S.R. had by 1939 equipped itself with the largest submarine fleet in the world (variously estimated at between 170 and 200 vessels), and also the largest fleet of motor torpedo boats. But with regard to capital ships it was still in arrears. During the Third Five Year Plan a vast naval construction programme was launched, but no figures of its results have been published. The successes of the Red Navy in the Baltic and Black Seas, however, prove that here, as elsewhere, the preparations of the Soviet Union were thoroughly in line with the needs of the situation.

The equipment of an army is a direct reflection of the industrial organisation of the country which supplies it. It is therefore impossible to appreciate the equipment of the Red Army without a few words on the industry which supplies it and the transport system by which its supplies are transported.

In the course of the First Five Year Plan the whole economic system of the Soviet Union was transformed. Reporting on this transformation in January, 1933, Stalin summarised the results in these words:

"We did not have an iron and steel industry, the foundation for the industrialisation of the country. Now we have this industry. We did not have a tractor industry. Now we have one. We did not have an automobile industry. Now we have one. We did not have a machine-tool industry. Now we have one. We did not have a big and up-to-date chemical industry. Now we have one. We did not have a real and big industry for the production of modern agricultural machinery. Now we have one. We did not have an aircraft industry. Now we have one. In output of electric power we were last on the list. Now we rank among the first. In output of oil products and coal we were last on the list. Now we rank among the first.

"We had only one coal and metallurgical base—in Ukraine—which we barely managed to keep going. We have not only succeeded in improving this base, but have created a new coal and metallurgical base—in the East—which is the pride of our country.

"We had only one centre of our textile industry—in the North of our country. As a result of our efforts we will have in the near future two new centres of the textile industry—in Central Asia and Western Siberia."

Figures of production reflect these developments which Stalin described. The First Five Year Plan was only the beginning. This year of 1941 is the fourth year of the Third Five Year Plan. The figures which follow give some idea of the extent to which industry and transport have developed. This in turn explains the excellence and quantity of the equipment of the Red Army, already described. It also inspires confidence that the Soviet economic system may be more able than that of many other countries to stand the strain of war:

PRODUCTION FIGURES

	1913	1928	1940
Pig Iron (million tons) ..	4.2	3.3	14.9
Steel	4.2	4.3	18.4
Aluminium (thousand tons)	0	0	59.9
Copper	31.1	35.5	166.2
Coal (million tons) ..	29.2	35.5	164.6

Production Figures—1913				1928	1940
Oil	9.2			11.7	34.2
Electricity (thousand million kwh)	1.9			5.0	39.6 (1937)
Locomotives (units) ..	664			479	1,626 (1938)
Goods Waggon (thousands) ..	14.8			10.8	49.1 (1938)
TRANSPORT FIGURES					
	1913			1935	1939
Goods carried by rail (million tons)	132.4			338.5	553.6 (July, 1940)
Daily car-loadings (thousands)	27.4			56	108
Passengers carried (millions)	185			919	1,178 (1937)
Length of lines (thousand kilometres)	58.5			83.8	95 (1942 plan)
Goods carried by water (thousand million ton kms.)	15.9			33.9	58
Length of airways (kilometres)	420			45,609	81,000 (1940)
	(1923)				

The above figures give some idea of the enormous growth in the economic potential of the U.S.S.R. as compared with Tsarist Russia. In the case of food supplies, average grain harvests in the four years prior to the present war have amounted to over 100 million tons, exceeding the harvests of the four years preceding 1914 by some fifty per cent. The U.S.S.R. today produces twice as much grain per head as the U.S.A., and three times as much as the British Empire.

Thus, the economic backing of the Red Army is tremendous. In contrast, Germany is faced with serious problems of supply. According to figures given in the Soviet official newspaper, *Izvestia*,* German imports, stopped by the blockade, amount to the following percentages of the total requirements: Food, sixty per cent.; rubber, seventy per cent.; oil (of which U.S.S.R. is the world's second largest producer), over fifty per cent.; manganese (of which the U.S.S.R. is the world's

* August, 1941.

largest producer), eighty-two per cent.; tin, seventy per cent.; and other non-ferrous metals, over fifty per cent. Thus, the U.S.S.R. is self-supporting to a far greater extent than Germany. Given a blockade on Germany, the position must before long become desperate. A blockade on the U.S.S.R. could not have a similarly fatal effect, whereas, in fact, the U.S.S.R. is receiving supplies from Britain and U.S.A. on a considerable scale. Thus, the already great resources of the U.S.S.R. are being supplemented by trade with Britain, which has the largest Empire in the world, and with the U.S.A., which is the one industrial country whose production in most basic industries still exceeds that of the U.S.S.R.

We have considered the equipment of the Red Army, and we have seen that its supplies are guaranteed by a vast industrial system which is almost wholly the product of thirteen years of industrial planning, and of a transport system which has been enormously extended over the same period.

In the respective fields of man-power, training and equipment, and of industrial reserves, the U.S.S.R. has entered upon the present struggle in a real "state of fighting preparedness". One factor, however, still remains to be considered, since in the present war this may tell in the long run as much as any other single factor. This is the question of *morale*.

According to Napoleon, "an army marches on its stomach." Of the Red Army it might be said: "This army marches on its head."

CHAPTER III

AN ARMY THAT MARCHES ON ITS HEAD

THE morale of the Red Army in the present conflict has been a matter of considerable comment in the Press:

"The Russians have certainly destroyed one familiar illusion, held not only in Nazi Germany but also by numerous British and American citizens", wrote A. J. Cummings in the *News Chronicle*,*—"the illusion that they would not fight valorously in defence of their fatherland. They are, in fact, fighting with a magnificent courage which has surprised the enemy and evoked his reluctant admiration.

"The illusion was based on the fixed but false idea that the Russian people are not in favour of the Soviet regime and would gladly be rid of it."

The Military Correspondent of the Nazi *Frankfurter Zeitung* had to admit: "The German people must understand that the Russian war is most complicated, not only owing to the enormous distances the German troops must cover, but also owing to the completely different attitude of the Red troops compared with the Belgian, French and Yugoslav troops.

"Soviet troops are unwilling to surrender or retreat. The moral paralysis of the enemy troops which contributed to such an extent to the victory in the West has not occurred in the East."†

The *Daily Telegraph* knocked the nail on the head when it wrote, also in a leading article: "Russian troops have thrashed Prussians before now. Their morale is better than the Nazis can produce because they are fighting for their country, and Hitler's legions for a tyrant's dream of universal Empire."‡

* 1st July, 1941.

† Quoted in *Daily Telegraph*, 10th July, 1941. ‡ 1st August, 1941.

From the above quotations it appears that the morale of the Red Army is not only better than that of the Nazis, but also than that of the armies against which the Nazis have hitherto had to fight. What is the cause of this better morale? How is it that the Red Army can enter the field, morally and materially, in a better state of fighting preparedness than any other army in the world?

Two factors may be taken as determining the morale of an army: The respect which the rank and file soldier has for his officers, for those in authority over him, and in the last analysis, for his Government. Secondly, the degree to which the private soldier feels he is personally concerned in the solution of the issues at stake. Given an army in which both these factors are favourable, the morale will be high. Where the opposite is the case, morale will be at a low level.

Let us consider the second factor first.

The Red soldier goes into action defending not only his own home and family, but his own country, in the literal sense of the term. There are no landlords in the Soviet Union, the land belongs to the people as a whole. Every Red soldier is aware, therefore, that he is defending *his* land from the enemy. There are also no private factory-owners in Russia, the factories are all public property. Every Red soldier, therefore, goes into action to defend *his* factories against the invader. These basic facts play a significant part in determining the level of the morale of the Red Army.

In addition, the Red soldier knows that he is defending a social regime which has brought to him and his family enormous benefits. Only the Soviet Union has provided its whole people (in peace-time) with a seven-hour working day without over-time, at least two weeks' paid holiday every year, equal pay for equal work and equal chances of promotion between women and men, better educational, health and maternity services than in any other country, and a planned economy which has abolished unemployment and economic crisis and ensured a rising standard of life for everybody in conditions of peace.

It is a community of this type which the Red soldier is defending. He knows it. Hence his high morale.

But the morale of every soldier is also affected by the way in which he, personally, and his family, are treated by the State which he is called upon to defend. Such questions as pay, chances of promotion, and care for dependants are of vital importance in affecting the morale of any army. The question of pensions, for himself if disabled, or for his dependants if he is killed, has a concrete bearing on the attitude of mind of every soldier in battle.

For conscripts in the Red Army, pay amounts to personal pocket-money, and men with dependants are not compelled to serve. For those who have done their normal military service, and are then called up as reserves, fifty per cent. of their average wages is guaranteed from their place of work. In case of total disablement, a Red soldier draws a pension equal to his average wage before he was called up. In case of partial disablement, he draws a smaller proportion of his previous wage in the form of a pension. If he is killed, then his dependants receive a pension based on his previous earnings before he was called up.

With regard to soldiers' dependants; these include children, brothers and sisters below working age, wives, fathers over sixty and mothers over fifty-five. Allowances to these dependants are paid direct by the State, while, in addition, the trade union or the collective farm to which the soldier belongs has a committee for the rendering of special assistance to the wives and dependants of those serving at the front. Thus, behind the lines, soldiers' dependants receive special care from the various social organisations of which he was a member in civilian life. Even school-children have organised societies for rendering assistance to soldiers' wives and dependants in their locality. The care of soldiers' dependants is regarded as a special responsibility of fellow workers and neighbours, in addition to the State allowances which they receive.

No soldier's family can be evicted in the U.S.S.R. from its home.

The Red soldier not only knows he is defending *his* country, but he knows that his country will care for him and his dependants if anything should happen to him. Furthermore, the Red

Army is a political army in that it is regarded as essential that its soldiers should know precisely what they are fighting for, who are their enemies, and what are the political issues at stake. It is only in the Red Army that politics are regarded as an essential weapon.

Because of this attitude to politics, the Soviet soldiers have always enjoyed exactly the same political rights as are enjoyed by the civilian population. Political education and political discussion are not only encouraged, they are regarded as essential. Thus, at each stage in the history of Soviet relations with the outside world, lectures and discussions in the Red Army on the Government's foreign policy have kept the soldiers informed of the political alignments and of the political issues at stake.

Thus, today, the Red soldiers are fighting Nazism with a far greater knowledge of the Fascist system and of how to oppose it than has been enjoyed by the other armies engaged in the present war. Further, it is only in the Red Army that the full truth of Fascism can be told, for in the Red Army, alone of all armies, are there no highly placed officers who themselves have sympathies with the Fascist regime.

While on this point, it is worth while emphasising the anti-Fascist nature of the Red Army. Every reader will remember the campaign in the British Press in 1936-1938 concerning "Stalin's purges", a campaign which tried to associate the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany as having regimes indistinguishable from each other in their internal organisation.

Today, however, it is becoming generally recognised that what occurred in the U.S.S.R. at that time was the annihilation of the pro-Fascist Fifth Column, of groups of individuals who, because of their personal ambitions, were ready to act in concert with agents of the Nazis. At that time the author of this book wrote as follows: ". . . on Soviet territory people have been shot for playing a part almost exactly similar to that of Franco in Spain or the 'hooded men' in France. . . . If my interpretation is correct, then the Soviet Government has saved itself from a similar fate to that of Spain and that which is

threatening France, and it has strengthened itself tremendously against the forces of Fascist aggression.”*

Today the truth of this analysis is accepted by leading Conservative newspapers. Thus, for example, on June 26th, 1941, the *Daily Telegraph* commented as follows: “During and after the purge and executions of 1937 it was obvious to everyone living in Russia that a serious situation had arisen. But, looking back today, one must admit the efficiency of the OGPU. Russia’s secret police were the first to discover the potential menace of the Fifth Column and the danger presented by a growing Quisling party which was keeping in close touch with Germany.”

The fact that Marshal Tukachevsky and his associates were shot has been a powerful factor in preserving the real anti-Fascist nature of the Red Army. If these men had not been shot, then the Red Army resistance could have been betrayed from the top whatever the morale of the ranks, and the fate of Poland and France might also have been suffered, at any rate temporarily, by the U.S.S.R.

The Red Army, we have seen, is a political army. The Red soldier is encouraged to think, to discuss the political issues at stake, to know what he is fighting for. Instructive, in contrast, are the following extracts from interviews with German soldiers, taken prisoner by the Red Army in the course of the battle:

Lance-Corporal Johann Meyer, from Bavaria, made the following statement in answer to a question concerning the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union: “I did not know how events had developed. As a soldier, whose duty it is to execute orders, I have no right to think, because the Fuehrer thinks for me.” Herbert Reussler, a senior corporal from Breslau, did not know why the Nazis had attacked the Soviet Union. He was asked: “Do you read the papers?” His answer was: “No, I fulfil the orders of my superiors.” “Why, are you a human being or a machine?” Breussler replied, after thinking it over: “Yes, I am a machine. We are all machines.”

The Soviet Press is full of such examples as these, showing the mentality of Hitler’s soldiers. Such reports particularly

* *Russia without Illusions*, 1938, p. 233.

impress the Soviet reader and the Red Army soldier, for their own conditions are so different.

This is why, in contrast to the German soldier who is not allowed to think, it may well be said that the "Red Army marches on its head". More than any other army in history, the soldier of the Red Army is encouraged, and expected, *to think*. Hitler was right when he told Lord Londonderry: "Soviet Russia has not only become the greatest military power, but at the same time the embodiment of an idea."*

So far we have considered the question from the political angle, but there is another side to all this. The Red soldier is not only encouraged to think politically, but to use his mind as a soldier. When, after an action, there is a lull, and the forces are withdrawn for a rest, discussion of the action is organised. In such discussions the Red soldier is encouraged to participate, to sum up the strong and weak points of the campaign, to criticise where he feels that criticism is deserved. And those privates who, in such discussions, show a clear understanding of the issues, are the ones which are singled out for promotion, so that their qualities of leadership can be fully utilised.

From the bottom to the top of the Red Army, promotion is on merit. And this carries with it a very important result: The officers of the Red Army are, without exception, those who have earned their rank through their efficient leadership. There is no case, in the Red Army, of young boys from the "public schools" being placed in the commissioned ranks over hardened and able soldiers, simply because they have the advantage of the correct accent in their speech, the right sort of school, or an unearned income to supplement their army pay. It follows that, in general, the Red soldier has every reason to respect his superior officer as being better equipped in all respects than he. And in any army, in so far as every officer earns the respect of his inferiors in rank, because of his own merits, the morale is bound to be good.

That this fact concerning the Red Army has penetrated the minds of a number of people in this country who are far from

* *Ourselves and Germany*, by Lord Londonderry, p. 99.

being pro-Communist is demonstrated by the following comment of the *Sunday Express*:

"Why should that country, which so many of our over-rated leaders despised, have been so much more efficient than we were? Perhaps the reason is that there is no old school tie to get in the way in Russia, no stupid idea that brains and the capacity to lead are the attributes of one tiny class of the community?"*

The above words sum up the second reason for the high morale of the Red Army:—No "old school tie", but promotion according to merit, with the result that the ranks always respect their commanders, because their commanders are the better qualified soldiers.

Recognising the role both of politics and of leadership in the determination of the morale of an army, the Soviet Government since its earliest days has created the special function of Political Commissar to deal with all matters affecting morale. The Political Commissar is, as it were, the "morale specialist" of the Red Armed Forces, a very important function in any army.

In 1918, in the war against foreign intervention and against the counter-revolutionary Russian generals; in 1937, after purging from the High Command the traitors Tukachevsky and his friends; in the war in Finland and again today, the Political Commissar has always played a prominent role in the Red Army.

The functions of the Political Commissar today may be summarised under the following heads: To ensure the widest possible political education of the troops, to see that they know what they are fighting for and that they understand the social and political issues at stake. Secondly, to ensure that, among the Red soldiers, all grievances and personal problems shall be promptly dealt with, so that every soldier can go into battle with a knowledge that his Soviet Government is sincerely interested in his personal welfare and in solving his personal problems whatever they may be. Thirdly, when the Red Army advances into enemy territory, it is the function of the Political Commissars to establish friendly relations with the working

* 6th July, 1941.

people of occupied territory, to win them over to the cause for which the Red Army is fighting, against the common foe. Fourthly, it is the function of the Political Commissar to keep a vigilant eye on all and sundry, to be on the look-out for spies and saboteurs behind the lines, to act in the best interests of the security of the unit to which he is attached. Finally, the work of the Political Commissars among prisoners must be mentioned, for on him rests also the task of seeing that the captured enemy soldiers learn the real issues of the battle.

It is clear from the above that this unique post, of Political Commissar, must indeed be a job fully absorbing the energies of a specialised worker. It would be too much to assume that the military commander, in addition to all his purely military responsibilities, could also adequately fulfil the functions of educationist and welfare officer, security officer and propagandist among the enemy prisoners and people of enemy territory. But it is also clear that only a political army, a thinking army, an army which has "an ideal to fight for" and a message for the peoples of enemy territory, has a need for Political Commissars as an essential part of its arsenal. The Red Army marches on its head, the Political Commissar is to a great degree the brain of the Red Army unit.

And every Political Commissar, to justify his rank, must be an exemplary fighter.

The whole organisation of the Red Army, from bottom to top, is based on the idea that a man is a better soldier if he can think. There is no place in the Red Army for such phrases as "Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die."

For, in the Soviet Union, it is seriously believed that if the soldier is able to reason why, then he will fight with a far greater determination and heroism than if he is a mere cog in a military machine, not allowed to think but trained only to obey. Initiative, understanding, conviction; these are all demanded of the Red soldier. And, in order to stimulate these qualities, the Red soldier is encouraged to think, to understand political issues, to take part in the political life of the country, to discuss military operations, and to raise his qualifications knowing that promotion always awaits him when his merits

as a soldier justify it. In these qualities the Red Army and the individual Red soldier differ from other armies and their soldiers.

As *The Times* put it in a leading article on July 14th, 1941: "The Russian soldier is fighting with the same endurance as he fought twenty-five years ago, but with greater skill and initiative, with far better equipment, and with *a more acute sense of the issues at stake.*" We now see why the Red Army of today has that "more acute sense of the issues" than was the case with the Tsarist Army in 1914.

CHAPTER IV

RED ARMY LEADERS

WHERE real equality of opportunity is established in an army, and men rise to positions of responsibility and leadership only on the basis of ability, it is natural that large numbers of ordinary working people should reach the high ranks. In contrast to all the other armies of the world today, the leadership of the Red Army is overwhelmingly in the hands of men of humble origin, men of the people, sons of stevedores and blacksmiths, miners and railwaymen, industrial workers and peasants. This fact is strikingly symbolised in the individuals who today are leading the Red Army: Stalin, son of a shoe-maker; Voroshilov, who went to work in a locomotive works at the age of 14; Timoshenko, a poor peasant from Bessarabia; Budenny (pronounced Budyonny), also of peasant origin, and a man who, in spite of great military genius, never advanced beyond the rank of sergeant in the Tsarist Army.

When one recalls a Member's insulting remarks on Ernest Bevin in the House of Commons, on the ground that he was an ordinary "labourer," it is clear that there must be certain snobbish people in high places in this country who can no more favour an Alliance with the Soviet Union and its army led by the sons of workers and peasants than they like to have Labour members in the Cabinet who have risen to such positions from the ranks of the working class.

But to the people of the U.S.S.R., the fact that the leaders of their army are all men risen from the ranks of ordinary citizens is a guarantee: It is a guarantee that they will truly represent the interests of the People, that there will be no Fascist Fifth-columnists among them, that they are completely free of those vested interests which, in other countries, have led to so many sad surrenders to the enemy.

At the head of the Red Army today stands Joseph Stalin, also Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R., and one of the Secretaries

of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He has been described by Henri Barbusse as "the man with the mind of a scholar, the face of a workman and the dress of a private soldier." It is doubtful whether there could be a more expressive description of Stalin than this.

Born in the little Georgian town of Gori, Joseph Jugashvili was the son of a shoemaker. His father died while he was still a boy, the home was afflicted by poverty. Young Joseph went to school in an atmosphere of national conflict: Georgia was oppressed by Russia, and within Georgia itself there was a bitter conflict of nationalities.

At the age of fifteen Joseph was sent to a religious seminary in Tiflis. He there began to organise secret study circles of students interested in science (Darwinism was banned by the church) and in politics. He was expelled from the Seminary for his political work among his fellow students. From that time onwards he was a full-time political worker, basing all his work on Marxism, and joining the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Socialists under the leadership of Lenin.

At the age of nineteen Stalin organised a strike of the Tiflis Railway workers. He then went to Batum, and was active among the oil workers. A high official of the Tsarist secret police wrote at that time: "In the autumn of 1901 the Tiflis Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party sent to Batum, to carry on propaganda among the workers there, one of its members called Joseph Jugashvili, an old student of the Tiflis Seminary. As a result of the activities of this Jugashvili . . . in all the workshops of Batum there began to arise Social Democratic organisations which at the start grew out of the Tiflis Committee."

The young revolutionary was arrested and imprisoned. He was sentenced to three years of exile. When at liberty, he continued his work, dodging the police by every possible device. To do so effectively, he went by many assumed names. "Stalin" is the one which has remained.

On Easter Sunday, 1909, Stalin was in gaol. He was forced to run the gauntlet while soldiers beat his back with their rifle-butts. He can therefore well understand the sufferings

of the German victims of Fascism, in Hitler's concentration camps. He has been in Tsarist Russian gaols.

Prior to the first world war Stalin had already established himself as a leading member of the Bolshevik Party. Especially had his work on the national question been praised by Lenin, the leader of the Party. For, doubtless as a result of his experiences in youth, Stalin always realised the need, in the interests of freedom, of establishing absolutely complete equality between all races and nationalities. The problem of how Socialists should apply this policy was the main burden of his early theoretical work. For this reason, when the Soviet Government was set up in 1917, Stalin was made the first Commissar for Nationalities. The clauses relating to national equality in both the first and the present Constitution of the U.S.S.R. were mainly his personal work.

In 1917, Stalin was one of the leading members of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. In the days and weeks prior to the Revolution, while Lenin was in hiding, it was he who reported in his place to the Central Committee. In 1922 he was elected General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee.

But what of Stalin as a soldier? What experience has Stalin had of warfare, of the army?

From 1918 to 1921 Soviet territory was invaded by the armed forces of some dozen or more States. In this period Stalin's military career began, as Voroshilov has pointed out, "rather by chance."* He was sent to Tsaritsyn on the Volga as Commissar-General for food supplies. He met, however, with such serious organisational inefficiency both in the civil and military authorities, owing to the growing Cossack counter-revolutionary movement fostered by the Germans, that he saw that drastic action was essential. Wiring Lenin in Moscow, he reported the situation, and was finally put in full control by the Military Council in Moscow. From then onwards a Revolutionary Military Council existed in Tsaritsyn, presided over by Stalin. This Council organised the defence of the city in August, 1918, one of the miracles of the war against the counter-revolution.

* *Stalin and the Red Army*, by K. Voroshilov.

In the east the situation became critical at the end of that year. The city of Perm was evacuated by the Third Army, and the authority of the Soviet authorities had been seriously undermined by counter-revolutionaries. Stalin was sent as a member of a Party Commission to investigate the conditions that led to the surrender of the city. Actually, the commission had to undertake urgent measures to strengthen the front, and in January, 1919, an offensive was launched.

No sooner had this second crisis, been met than the position in the North became serious. The enemy was marching on Petrograd. Stalin was sent to the city to help to organise the defences. The situation was radically improved and the enemy never reached Petrograd.

In the autumn of 1919, when the most decisive period of the civil war was reached, a general retreat was taking place all along the Southern Front.

The enemy forces were marching northwards, and even Moscow was threatened. Stalin was now sent to the Southern Front as a member of the Revolutionary Military Council. It was here that his most famous contribution to Red Army strategy was made:

The Red forces were suffering severe defeats on the main sector which ran from Kursk, through Orel to Tula. The official plan of campaign provided for an attack to be launched by the left flank, from Tsaritsyn towards Novorossysk, across the steppes of the Don.

Stalin was responsible for the rejection of this plan. Instead of an attack through the Steppes, he proposed an attack through the Donetz Basin, opposing this to the official plan of the High Command. He characterised the old plan in these words: "The other day the Commander-in-Chief gave orders to Shorin to advance on Novorossisk across the Don steppe, along a line which our aviators might find convenient to fly, but which our infantry would find impossible to trek. It requires no proof to show that this advance amidst hostile surroundings, with roads totally lacking, threatens us with complete disaster. It is not hard to understand that, as recent experience shows, this campaign against the Cossack villages

can only serve to antagonise the Cossacks towards us and made them rally round Denikin in defence of their villages; it can only put Denikin in the light of a saviour of the Don; it can only create a Cossack army for Denikin; that is to say, it can only strengthen Denikin. It is therefore necessary right away, without loss of time, to alter the old plan, which experience has already discredited, and replace it by a plan according to which the main attack will be launched on Rostov—by way of Kharkhov and the Donetz Basin.

"Firstly, we shall be in surroundings which are not hostile, but on the contrary sympathetic to us, a circumstance which will facilitate our advance. Secondly, we shall secure an extremely important railway system (that of the Donetz Basin) and the main artery feeding Denikin's army—the Voronesh-Rostov line . . . Thirdly, by this advance we shall cut Denikin's army in two . . . Fourthly, we shall be in a position to set the Cossacks quarrelling with Denikin, who, if our advance is successful, will try to move the Cossack units to the West, to which the majority of the Cossacks will not agree . . . Fifthly, we shall secure coal, while Denikin will be left without coal."

Stalin's plan was accepted by the Central Committee of the Party and by the Soviet General Staff. It was successful. It was the turning point in the Civil War. And the Commander-in-Chief who had insisted so stubbornly on the "old plan," but had been overruled, was Leon Trotsky.

The conception of a line of advance which took into account as a vital factor the outlook of the local population shows that Stalin, as a military leader, was no less a politician. His stress on the value of the sympathetic population of the industrial Donetz Basin as against the possible hostility of the Cossack peasantry shows that, in military matters, a revolutionary army has other concerns besides the purely military—a fact already made clear by Soviet propaganda in the present war. And when the time comes for a Red Army advance, then again, under Stalin's leadership, the advance will likely first be pressed in those territories where the Red Army will be most welcomed by the people themselves.

Though the above is his best known military campaign, Stalin's work with the Red Army did not cease with the successful defeat of Denikin in the South. His reputation as a military leader was now made, and further work awaited him. In spite of ill-health, he was sent to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Caucasian front; and again, in August, 1920, he was instructed to form a Revolutionary Military Council on the Kuban front, against the forces of General Wrangel. He was given complete command of this front. Later on, he was a member of the Revolutionary Council of the South Western Front, during the Polish campaign.

From the above facts of history it is clear that Stalin, Commander-in-Chief of the Red Armies today, has had enormous military experience in the defence of the very same territories which are now resisting the onslaught of the Nazis. And with him are men who, also in the period 1918-1921, bore their share in the defence of Soviet Russia against foreign armies. Voroshilov, Timoshenko and Budenny were all associated with Stalin in those great campaigns which defeated the foreign enemy and the Russian White Guards in 1918-1921.

The commanders of the three main fronts since the Nazi attack have been the three Marshals of the Red Army, Voroshilov, Timoshenko and Budenny. Each of them has had a brilliant military career, each of them has risen from the ranks of the humble people.

Klimenty Voroshilov was born ten years after Stalin. Working at a locomotive works from the age of fifteen, he became interested in the working-class and socialist movement. While still in his teens he led the first big strike in the works. At the age of twenty-one he was involved in the great wave of revolution which swept through Russia. Leader of the Lugansk working people, he was arrested, but released as a result of public protest. In 1907 he visited London as a delegate to the Fifth Congress of the Bolshevik Party. On returning to Russia, he spent six years in exile.

A year later he escaped, continued to carry on his work for the emancipation of the working people, and spent part of this period working with Stalin at Baku.

In February, 1917, Voroshilov returned to his native town of Lugansk. In December, on moving to Petrograd, he was elected President of the capital's Committee of Defence. Henceforth his life has been devoted to military affairs.

In 1918, faced with the counter-revolutionary war and foreign intervention, Voroshilov fought the Germans in the Ukraine, where he built up the Fifth Ukrainian Army, formed out of the Red Guard units which the workers and peasants had themselves been organising. Later, with Stalin, he was sent to the defence of Tsaritsyn.

In 1919 Voroshilov was Commissar for the Interior in the Ukraine, Commander of the Kharkhov Military Region and Commander of the Fourteenth Army. In November, 1919, he became a member of the First Military Revolutionary Committee of the First Cavalry Army, built up by Budenny. In this position he worked closely with Stalin on the plans which defeated Denikin on the Polish front and on the defeat of General Wrangel. In 1920 he was elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

His military career since that time can be summarised as follows: In 1922 he was made Commander of the North Caucasus Military Region. Later, of the Moscow Region. Then, in 1925, on the death of Frunze, the then Commissar for Defence, he became Commissar. He held this job until he was succeeded by Timoshenko, Voroshilov himself then becoming Chairman of the Council for Defence, a body which co-ordinates the leadership of the armed forces with that of the arms and munitions industry of the Soviet Union.

When the three main prongs of the Nazi attack on the U.S.S.R. had become clearly defined, Voroshilov was placed in charge of the Northern Front.

In charge of the Central Front is S. K. Timoshenko, born of a peasant family in the village of Furkmanka, Bessarabia, in 1895. He started life as a farm labourer, was later conscripted into the Tsarist army, and fought in the first World War. Demobilised in 1918, he at once joined the guerilla fighters who were waging war for the Soviets against the armies of intervention. As a guerilla fighter he operated in

the Crimea against foreign troops and Russian White Guards. He was elected commander of a platoon, and later, commander of a squadron. When the detachment was reorganised into a regiment, Timoshenko was put in command. They fought their way to Tsaritsyn, defended by Stalin and Voroshilov, and the regiment was merged with the Tenth Army, commanded by Voroshilov. Timoshenko was appointed Commander of the Second Separate Cavalry Brigade. The next year, when the Red Mounted Army was formed, Timoshenko's brigade was merged with Budenny's cavalry, and Timoshenko was appointed commander of the Sixth Cavalry Division at the age of 24. This Division played an important part in the re-taking of Rostov after it had passed into the hands of the enemy.

The participation of the Red Army in the political life of the country caused Timoshenko, in 1920, to be elected as delegate of the First Cavalry Army to the Congress of Soviets.

Placed in command of the Fourth Cavalry Division, Timoshenko played a leading part in clearing the Crimea of all foreign troops, the last of which were by this time evacuating Soviet European territory. He was twice wounded in these battles.

When the Civil War came to an end, Timoshenko was sent to the Higher Military Academy, and in 1927 finished the special courses for the Higher Command. Other positions held by him have been: March, 1925, appointed Commander-Commissar of the Third Cavalry Corps; August, 1933, Assistant Commander of the Belorussian Military District; September, 1935, Assistant Commander of Kiev Military District; June, 1937, Commander of North Caucasus Military District; September, 1937, Commander of Kharkov Military District; February, 1938, Kiev Special Military District.

Timoshenko has travelled considerably abroad, becoming well versed in the military affairs of other countries. It was also under his command that the Red Army took up its new positions in September, 1939, following the departure of the then Polish Government for Rumania. In May, 1940, he was appointed Commissar for Defence, a position which he held until it was taken over by Stalin in the present war.

The commander of the Southern Front is Semyon M. Budenny, born in 1883 of a peasant family in the Don district. He taught himself to read and write, fought as a private in the Russo-Japanese war, and as a sergeant in the first world war. During the period from February, 1917, onwards Budenny conducted considerable revolutionary propaganda among the soldiers, was elected Chairman of the Soldiers' Committee of his regiment, and thence to the newly formed Soviet government of the Don.

In February, 1918, Budenny formed the first detachment of Red Cavalry. In 1919 he joined the Communist Party.

In June, 1919, Budenny was placed in charge of a cavalry corps and smashed two White units led by famous generals. One of them was General Krassnov, who later fled to Germany and became a friend of Hitler. A few months later Budenny was created commander of the Legendary First Red Cavalry Army, which played a heroic part in destroying the White armies in the Don, Kuban and North Caucasus districts.

In 1920 Budenny was placed on the Polish front, where Pilsudski had captured Kiev. Budenny's forces broke through to Pilsudski's rear, and the Poles were forced to evacuate Ukraine. Budenny then returned to the Southern front where he forced his way to the rear of General Wrangel's army, cutting off its retreat.

Since those hectic days of the war against foreign intervention Budenny has been among the most popular figures in the Soviet Union, an almost legendary hero. In 1924 he was appointed Chief Cavalry Inspector. In 1935 he was made a Marshal of the Soviet Union and in 1937 he was made Commander of the Moscow Military District. He is a member of the Soviet Parliament, and a holder of many decorations.

The above facts, concerning the life and work of the leaders of the Red Army today, make it quite clear that the Red Army is unique. No other army in the world can claim to be led by men who are one and all the sons of ordinary working people and ordinary peasants, men who went to work at the age of fourteen in factory and farm. And though we have only considered the four leading personalities, that which has been

said of them is true also for the rest. The overwhelming majority of the leaders of the Red Army have risen to their present positions from the ranks of the ordinary working population, and it is the rarest exception to find in the high ranks who have come from the old property-owning ruling class of Russia, sons of landlords, bankers and big business men.

In contrast to the individuals whose lives we have studied, is the case of Marshal Tukhachevsky, shot in 1937 for his complicity in Fifth Column activities. Whereas Stalin, Voroshilov, Timoshenko and Budenny were men of humble origin, men of the People, Tukhachevsky was one of the few high officers in the Red Army who came from the decadent ruling caste of Tsarist Russia. It may well be that the Fifth Columnist activities of Tukhachevsky were not unconnected with the fact that he, with his own personal origin, found he had more in common with the types of men in Hitler's general staff than he had with the true men of the people who have risen to leading positions in the Red Army.

CHAPTER V

A PEOPLE MOBILISED

WE now know the leaders; what of the people? Stalin spoke to the people on July 3rd, 1941. He addressed them as "Comrades! Citizens! Brothers and Sisters! Men of our Army and Navy! . . . my friends!"

And having explained the serious situation to them, he called upon them to organise their forces in every possible way behind the Red Army. Here were his main instructions:

"All our work must be immediately reconstructed on a war footing, everything must be subordinated to the interests of the front and the task of organising the destruction of the enemy The peoples of the Soviet Union must rise against the enemy, and defend their rights and their land. The Red Army, the Red Navy, and all citizens of the Soviet Union must defend every inch of Soviet soil, must fight to the last drop of blood for our towns and villages, must display the daring initiative and intelligence that are inherent in our people.

"We must organise all-round assistance to the Red Army, ensure powerful reinforcements for its ranks and the supply of everything it requires, we must organise the rapid transport of troops and military freight, and extensive aid to the wounded.

"We must strengthen the Red Army's rear, subordinating all our work to this cause, all our industries must be got to work with a greater intensity, to produce more rifles, machine-guns, artillery, bullets, shells, aeroplanes. We must organise the guarding of factories, power stations, telephone and telegraphic communications, and arrange effective A.R.P. in all localities.

"We must wage a ruthless fight against all disorganisers of the rear, deserters, panic-mongers, rumour-mongers, exterminate spies, diversionists, enemy parachutists, rendering rapid aid in all this to our extermination battalions. We must

bear in mind that the enemy is crafty, unscrupulous, experienced in deception and the dissemination of false rumours. We must reckon with this and not fall victim to provocation. . . .

"The working people of Moscow and Leningrad have already commenced to form vast popular levies in support of the Red Army. Such popular levies must be raised in every city that is in danger of enemy invasion, all working people must be roused to defend our freedom, our honour, our country—in our patriotic war against German Fascism."

Reinforcements for the Red Army—Supplies—Replacing those who join up—Initiative of the people—Fight against rumour-mongers and against parachutists—a whole people called to action!

And the results?—Without delay the whole people of the Soviet Union responded to this call.

The first and most immediate response to the new war situation came in production. In spite of the fact that millions of men were called to the Army, production rose above the pre-war level. July, 1941, proved to be a record month in the whole history of Soviet production: At the Stalingrad Tractor Plant the average daily output per worker rose by 27·4 per cent. between June 22nd and July 13th. At the Ural waggon-building plant the figure was 19·9 per cent. At the "Compressor" plant the output per worker during the first ten days of July was 78·8 per cent. greater than during the first ten days of June. In the coal mines it was 10 per cent. greater, at a Leningrad tannery 27·6 per cent., and at the Stalinabad tannery there was an increase of 38 per cent. The daily output per worker at the Burevestnik footwear factory in Moscow showed a 44·4 per cent. increase in the beginning of July over the corresponding period in June.

In the defence industry the increase in the productivity of labour was even greater than elsewhere.

Behind these cold figures lies a dramatic story—the story of workers who, when their comrades were called up, doubled and trebled their effort to make up the deficiency; the story of women who, having been housewives hitherto, went into

industry and mastered the jobs of men called up without a moment's delay.

Striking stories of records in production fill the Soviet press: From Estonia, during the first week of the war, it was reported that the boiler-makers of the Krasny Krul plant were fulfilling their plan of production by 400 per cent. Tobacco workers pledged themselves to turn out seventy-five million extra cigarettes above the half-year plan. In Cernauti, Northern Bukhovina, the workers in a textile mill promised to produce an extra 100,000 yards of fabric above the plan . . . before the Germans took the city.

Deeds of individual heroism in production in the Soviet Union are given equal prominence with tales of heroic exploits at the front. Two miners at the Gorlovka Pit, No. 1920, took the place of twenty miners in the shift of June 27th! At Pit No. 1617, the miner Guernko started daily to mine double or treble the normal amount of coal. Many other workers at the pits in the Donbas began to treble their daily output in face of the country's needs.

Railway workers also distinguished themselves in their efforts to raise production and improve transport. The Esthonian engine driver, Gololidov, made two trips without resting. On returning home he found that the driver who was to take over for the next trip was ill. He went back and did a third shift without a word. Two fitters, Ekberg and Keld, repaired four locomotives in four hours.

At one of Moscow's biggest railway depots a meeting of locomotive drivers was held. They issued the following appeal: "In 1919, when the young Soviet State was blockaded by White Guards and interventionists, the Bolshevik Party issued a call to work in the rear in a revolutionary fashion. In answer to the Party's call the workers of our depot organised the first subbotnik" (voluntary day's work on a day off). "Today our group appeals to all railway workers to mobilise all their forces in order to fulfil their task with honour."

On railwaymen there often falls a specially important task: To carry supplies to the front line. And while other workers,

from factory and field, may evacuate, the work of transport goes on, right up to the front itself.

Heroic tales are told of the railwaymen at the front. One team, led by the engine-driver, Melnikov, drove trains in the area of the front for ten days without relief. Another engine-driver, Bezugly, was twice wounded on a journey, but safely brought his train through nevertheless. Engine-driver Turshinin, of the Syzran depot, drove an engine for sixty-one hours at a stretch. Solovyev's brigade, on the Moscow-Kiev line, used to repair one car in seventy-two hours. They reduced the time of the job to eight hours.

The most striking story of an engine-driver at the front is that of Mushenkov, whose train was attacked by a dive-bomber. By jamming on his brakes, he dodged the first bomb. Then, by speeding, he got out of range of the next. By stopping and starting he was able to dodge the aim of the plane, and the train got through.

On the first day of the war, twenty old-age pensioners, turners, boiler-makers, planers and moulders, returned to a factory in Rostov-on-Don.

After Stalin's speech on July 3rd, a further stimulus was given to heroic work in production. In the Simferopol motor repair works, two workers, Shirkin and Petrov, doubled their output. A woman worker, Rasseva, increased her quota by eighty per cent. At the Tagil blast furnaces another old-age pensioner, Bilman, applied for the job of his son who had been called up. On the Moscow Underground a number of workers did a five-day job in twenty-one hours without a rest interval. A fitter in the Molotov works in Khabarovsk worked for eighteen hours continuously, and Rodin, a planer in the Moscow ball-bearing works, did not leave the shop for three days while working on an urgent order.

The slogan throughout Soviet industry is: "Work as valiantly as the Red Army fights."

In agriculture, as in industry, enormous efforts have been made to speed up production. And Nature has been kind, most districts have had a record harvest this year.

Reports at the end of July made clear the fact that harvesting was being completed more rapidly than in any previous year. By July 10th, 10.3 million acres had been reaped, as compared with six million by the same date in 1940. All able-bodied men, women and young people were working in the fields, students and school-children had volunteered to make good the loss of those called to the front. Over 12,000 such volunteers went to the countryside from the schools and universities of the city of Kharkov alone.

But most sensational of all the aspects of the food situation was the fact that the collective farmers, in view of the national emergency, actually increased their supplies of food to the towns, and refrained from increasing prices: The result was that, for the first time in history, the patriotism of farmers provided more food in war than in peace, and the food profiteer, universal in the rest of the world, is conspicuous by his absence.

The following examples demonstrate what is occurring: In the Pervomaïsk District the collective farmers provided the State with an extra thirty cartloads of flax out of their own reserves. Collective farms in the Irkutsk region decided to deliver all supplies due to the State ahead of time. In far away Buryat-Mongolia, the collective farmers made advance deliveries of grain, amounting to over 1,000 tons, and supplied meat to an extra thirty per cent. in excess of the plan.

Both in industry and in agriculture, an enormous burden has been shouldered by the women. There is, of course, an encouragement which is lacking elsewhere: They receive the same pay as men whatever job they choose to do, and the State provision of crèches and kindergartens gives them peace of mind concerning their families while they are at work.

In the single area of the North Caucasus, 5,000 women were driving tractors during the harvesting, and 10,000 school-children spent their holidays giving assistance on the farms. In Azerbaidjan, owing to the fact that thousands of women decided to train as chauffeurs, turners, and for other jobs, more than a hundred new kindergartens and crèches were quickly opened to take care of their children. In the Donetz Basin a team of women loaders was organised for the first time,

loading fourteen or fifteen tons of coal a day. The first woman operator of a mechanical hewer started on the job.

The supply of food in the towns, owing to the attitude of the collective farmers, has not suffered from the war. Deliveries of eggs have risen, also milk and other dairy produce; none of which have been rationed.

Since, however, economy must be enforced, a general rationing order was introduced in July, covering bread, sugar, meat, fats and cereals. The rationing system discriminates between different categories of workers, and also between adults and children. The best rations go to the children and to workers underground and in heavy industry.

Apart from the actual work of production, Stalin appealed for the organising of a People's Levy (the Russian equivalent of a Home Guard), and adequate A.R.P.

The campaign for the People's Levy is having its effect on the whole man-power of the country behind the lines. The workers in the factories themselves decide who shall join the People's Army, and who shall remain at work. Those who are on highly skilled jobs must remain at their work, the rest are permitted to join up with the People's Army. It is these units of the People's Army which, if a town is occupied, form a nucleus for the guerilla fighting which the Nazis have come so much to fear.

The call to the People's Guard has met with a striking response from many who, for one or another reason, were not suitable for the regular army. Thus, an engineering worker called Denisov wrote: "I am fifty-nine years old, I am in good health and spirits. I took part in the armed uprising in 1905. I fought in the Imperialist War against the Germans. I was a volunteer in the Red Guard, and in the October Revolution I went into action against the German Junkers. I am able to defend the Soviet Land and I will stand firm by the Soviet Government."

Those who are either too old or too young for the regular army are accepted into the People's Army, which is based on units formed round the factory or collective farm.

A Government decree in July introduced compulsory A.R.P training for all citizens from the age of sixteen to sixty. In the large cities, shelters were immediately prepared, and in Moscow, when the siren sounds, the current on the Underground is switched off, and the shelterers may use the whole length of the tunnels—which are lighted.

The fight against incendiary bombs has been conducted with considerable efficiency. Roof-spotters are equipped with asbestos gloves, and the incendiaries are hurled to the ground before they can do harm. Here is a description by the Moscow Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* of how it is done:

"Moscow's first air-raid was, in fact, rather an ambitious fire-raising affair.

"As such, it failed miserably, although, judging from what I saw of it, hundreds of incendiaries must have been dropped . . .

"My respect for Moscow's professional fire-brigade has been immensely increased by the night's events, and from what I saw of the amateur fire-fighting, the boys made a grand job of it.

"One boy on the roof opposite my house dived at an incendiary as if he had been doing it all his life, fielded it with fire-proof gloves, and threw it down into the courtyard before it blazed up I saw three other incendiaries got off this roof with the same speed."*

And this is the verdict of the *Sunday Times* correspondent:

"Fire-fighting is well organised under a system which may seem rigid and ruthless, but brings results. It is impossible here for premises to be locked up and left unattended over the week-end. In big buildings each fire-watcher is personally responsible for a given section of the roof, while groups of watchers have to answer for a number of small houses.

"One of Moscow's largest industrial plants, comparable with the Ford works in Detroit, which I visited this week, had been showered with every kind of incendiary bomb, but not a single building had been burned—not even a solitary wooden house which alone had been struck by twenty incendiaries."†

* 21st July, 1941.

† 10th August, 1941.

The descriptions of these correspondents are typical. Many boys of fourteen and fifteen are working on roofs, spotting and extinguishing incendiaries. Alexander Isankin, a fourteen-year old schoolboy, put out an incendiary which fell through a roof into an attic. He then jumped to a nearby roof with two pals and they put out several more incendiaries. A fifteen-year old Moscow schoolboy, Nevedov, has received a medal for distinguished service in fire-fighting. Volodya Talalov, another schoolboy, was similarly awarded after the first few raids.

While, in the big cities, the most urgent need for civil defence is in A.R.P., in the countryside and near the front line, a far more important question is the combating of parachutists and spies. And the Nazis have ingenious ways of disguising their agents: In one case, a blind beggar boy played an accordion by the roadside. Suspecting something—his clothes were not quite in conformity with reality—a Red Army major suddenly whispered "Sprechen Sie Deutsch" in his ear. His reflex was the answer "Ja". He was caught. He was not really blind. And in the accordion was a neatly made miniature radio set. Other cases of parachutists landing with miniature disguised radio sets have been reported.

The collective farmers are playing their part in guarding against such marauders. Pity the stranger entering a Soviet village today without authentic documents to establish his identity! Near one village a Nazi plane made a forced landing in the first few days of the war. The crew of three had not climbed out before the plane was surrounded by peasant women with pitchforks, axes and rakes. The Germans surrendered without resistance.

"I would never have believed," said Kunert, a non-commissioned officer, "that we German officers would be taken prisoner by peasant women. I have fought a great deal, but never have I met such resistance from the ordinary population."

Another story is told of a collective farmer who saw two suspicious-looking men near his village. He reported them. The spy-destruction unit of the People's Army got busy. They were caught, examined, found to be spies. They gave

away their own side's plans, and a whole group of enemy troops was rounded up as a result of their information.

A third incident worth recording occurred not far from Moscow, when a bomber was brought down. The crew of four climbed out of the plane, armed with sub-machine guns. Collective farmers noted that it was a Nazi plane and informed the local section of the People's Army. They took the Nazis with revolvers, no attempt at resistance being offered. No sooner had they done so than one of the airmen pointed to another and said: "He is an S.S. man and should be arrested."

Apart from civil defence work there is the question of nursing, and here, of course, the women are playing the most important part. At the end of July, in the course of a few days, 177 groups were formed to study nursing in their spare time in Moscow, and another 250 groups were formed for other Red Cross work. The total number of women recruited in those few days was 20,000, from 350 different enterprises.

The part played by children in the present crisis in the U.S.S.R. is interesting: Not only are they permitted to take part in fire-fighting, but during their school holidays many of them volunteered for harvesting and other work. In the Krasnodar Grain State Farm, 200 school children worked during their holidays, and some of the boys actually learnt to drive combine-harvesters. In the Sovietsk District of the Kursk Region school children weeded 27,000 acres of cereals. Two thousand students and school children from Kalinin volunteered for peat-bog work.

A number of the younger children in different towns have formed their own committees for aid to the families of Red Army men. They have volunteered to look after the shopping and housework, enabling the housewife to go to work. The young people are also giving assistance in the hospitals.

Housewives in the Tula district recently received a notice: "If you have young children, bring them to 47, Leo Tolstoy Street—the children will look after them." The school children, on the suggestion of a teacher, had decided to organise a kindergarten. These same children took under their care sixty wives of Red Army men, helping with their shopping and so

forth. In Novosibirsk a similar children's committee was organised to look after children whose mothers were at work, to do housework, and to dig in the gardens of Red Army men's families.

In the first days of the war some 6,000 doctors and other medical workers were called up for service at the front. In spite of this, the doctors and nurses in the rear have kept the work going without any serious disorganisation, and in addition have been training the Red Cross volunteers in large numbers. All medical institutions, whatever their character, have made possible the rendering of first aid in cases of air raid casualties.

The younger children have been evacuated from dangerous areas, this being facilitated by the fact that throughout the U.S.S.R. there exists a network of children's camps in the vicinity of all the large cities, usually used only in the summer months, but now available for full-time evacuees.

And how is the tremendous war effort of the U.S.S.R. being financed?

At the very beginning of the Nazi invasion, the Soviet Government doubled the rate of income-tax on all higher incomes, thus introducing a 100 per cent. tax on all incomes over a certain sum. They also enacted that, for all of military age but exempt from military service, the rate of tax should be double the normal.

At the same time, on the part of the people, there arose a movement for a People's Defence Fund, made up of contributions in goods and in money, for the State Defence Budget.

Thus, collective farmers brought extra supplies to the State depots, "for the Defence Fund." The descendants of the great poet, Lermontov, have handed over family jewelry to the Fund. From Leningrad, after Voroshilov's moving appeal to defend the city at all costs, came the news that a group of suburban telephone workers had come to the State Bank with brooches, rings and silver trinkets, "for the Defence Fund!"

Thus, apart from taxation, the people on their own initiative, workers, peasants and professional people, are contributing to the financing of the defence of the country. It should be

noted, too, that these contributions are gifts, quite apart from contributions to taxes and the State loans.

The above instances of the mobilisation of the whole people of the Soviet Union in a war of national defence make quite clear that there must be a unanimity, a strong bond of unity among the people of the U.S.S.R. What is the secret?

The secret is this simple fact: The people of the U.S.S.R. know that the whole of their farms, their land, and their factories belong to them.

If a house catches fire, the whole family works to put it out, old and young alike. All who are able to do something do what they can.

Exactly the same is true of the Soviet Union as a whole. The U.S.S.R. is *their* house, and the family metaphor used by Stalin in appealing to "brothers and sisters" was not demagoguery, it meant something.

Above all, every Soviet worker knows that nobody else, living in comparative luxury, will profit from his extra labour. No financial columns will report higher dividends as a result of the extra hours of toil of a Russian railwayman or Ukrainian coalminer. Therefore they can give of their best without feeling that they are being "done," that someone else is gaining at their expense.

The women of the Soviet Union, entering industry to take their husbands' and sons' places at the bench, receive the same wage as their men received on similar work. They are not forced to feel that they are being used to cheapen labour, to undercut the established standards of the men. They do not feel that for every piece of work accomplished their employer is making a greater profit out of them than he would have made if a man had been doing the same job.

And as for the profiteer—he is extinct—almost!

In the first days of the blackout in Moscow a gallant patriot thought he would make some money easily by purchasing all the candles he could get and retailing them at a profit. He was tried in court and got a sentence of ten years' imprisonment! When the people know that that is the treatment

meted out to profiteers, they work with a will, never feeling that someone else is "doing" them on the sly in the name of patriotism and equal sacrifice!

That is the secret of the Mobilisation of the Whole Soviet People.

CHAPTER VI

RED ARMS IN ACTION

FROM the first day of the Nazi attack the effectiveness of the Red Army resistance surprised observers who, for many years, had grossly underestimated the strength and fighting capacity of the Red Army.

Not only the German General Staff had possibly underestimated their foe, but it should be borne in mind that in the early part of 1940 the British and French General Staffs and Governments were firmly convinced that General Mannerheim in Finland did not need reinforcements until May. By March the Finnish rulers had ceased fire. Which means that the Allied General Staffs also had grossly underestimated the fighting capacity of the Red Army.

The events that followed July 22nd came as something of a surprise. Here are some of the comments on the fighting of the Red Army, and its equipment, during the first month of the Nazi onslaught. All combine to show that the morale, equipment and leadership of the Red Army turned out to be far better than most critics expected.

At the end of the first week of the fighting, Brigadier-General Charteris, writing in the *Manchester Guardian*,* summed up the position as follows:

"From the information available the Russian defence seems so far to be both wise and skilful. It makes no attempt to oppose a rigid line on which the German dive-bombers and armoured vehicles can bite. It is a defence in depth; armoured divisions are dealt with in much the same way as our troops are taught to deal with single armoured vehicles. They are allowed to pass through and then are attacked from the flanks and rear and are cut off. The outcome of these tactics cannot yet be foreseen, but the destruction of the headquarters of the 39th German Armoured Division is at least a good sign.

* 1st July, 1941.

"The issue of these gigantic battles will almost certainly turn on the problem of supplies. It is satisfactory to note that so far the Russian armies appear to have been far more successful than they were in their last great conflict with Germany."

On the same day an interesting comment was reported in the *Evening Standard* from France: "Vichy comment on the Minsk battle was that the action developing before the town was a gigantic 'see-saw' in which some million men were involved."

"The Russians had apparently perfected the tactics which General Weygand tried vainly to apply against the Germans in the Battle of France."

And how did these first battles appear to the Nazi invaders? They were completely taken aback by the courage and determination of the Red Army's defence, as the following report* makes clear: A German war correspondent told the following story of the resistance of Russian soldiers when flame-throwers had penetrated the slots of their pill-boxes at Grodno, Poland:

"It was not long," he said, "before the wooden lining of the pill-boxes turned to cinders. The iron walls and supports were red hot and threw off sizzling sparks in all directions. Yet those who were still inside that flaming hell kept on firing. Hand grenades were thrown inside and yet those Reds kept replying with their own guns."

"At last one of the pill-box doors was opened and two Russians emerged badly wounded and severely burned. We thought they were all in and more than glad to surrender. But no. A third Russian suddenly appeared and started firing his machine-gun which he had dragged out of the burning pill-box."

"I shall never forget those Russians. Their eyes reflected their bitterness and glowed with hatred as they still fought on."

"Time and again in this fight against the Reds we come across this stubborn resistance."

A week later *The Times*† printed the following comment from the German newspaper, *Frankfurter Zeitung*: "Perhaps

* Quoted by the *Evening Standard*, 1st July, 1941.

† 7th July, 1941.

we at home, accustomed as we are to endless victories, and far away as we are from the scenes of the war drama, are not quite clear what the last few days demanded of our troops, what hardships they had to overcome as a result of the unaccustomed eastern climate—the aridity of the steppes, and the violence of the storms now raging round Lvov and Vilna. In blowing up the Russian defences, in making desperate attacks on the enemy's armoured units, in enduring the exhausting guerilla warfare behind their own lines, the German soldiers have faced an opponent whose whole habits of thought and methods of warfare are utterly alien to his own."

And the next day the *Daily Express* printed the following report from the Berlin correspondent of the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*: "One of the greatest surprises is the extent of the Russian tank weapon, of which even the few remnants left by the Russian rearguard make a deep impression.

"Viewing the Soviet war material, one is impressed by the big industrial organisational performance it represents.

"The guns, caterpillars and tanks appear to be completely new. Immaculately painted, well looked after, cleanly finished and well designed, these steel machines stand there produced by a State which twenty years ago hardly possessed its own machine and armament factories. . . .

"Soviet tanks include 15-tonners, medium tanks and giant 60-tonners, built on the French pattern, with three gun turrets containing a howitzer, two light guns, and several machine-guns. . . . Wherever the Russians have been forced to retreat they have withdrawn in good order. On the roads hardly any material has been abandoned, and no equipment thrown away."

Two days later the *Daily Telegraph** quoted the Military Correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* as saying: "The German people must understand that the Russian war is most complicated, not only owing to the enormous distances the German troops must cover, but also owing to the completely different attitude of the Red troops compared with the Belgian, French and Yugoslav troops.

* 10th July, 1941.

"Soviet troops are unwilling to surrender or retreat. The moral paralysis of the enemy troops which contributed to such an extent to the victory in the West has not occurred in the East."

"Student of War," in the same paper on the same day, summed up the position thus: "The Russians are fighting with a boldness and an originality that are certainly perplexing the Germans. They are showing in their rank and file a courage that is impressing everyone. They have, most surprising of all, a vast fund of individual initiative to draw upon."

Towards the end of July the Berlin correspondent of a Zurich paper summed up the Russian tactics in words similar to those of Brigadier-General Charteris, quoted above: "When German tanks penetrate their front", he writes, "the Russian divisions continue the struggle and cut off the tanks from their communications. At the same time they continually make fresh attacks with their own tanks against the following German infantry, which is thus forced to bear the full weight of the fighting."

"The most complicated situations occur during the night, when it continually happens that Russian tanks attach themselves to German columns and suddenly open fire."

"Student of War," in the *Daily Telegraph* on July 22nd, summed up the extraordinary nature of these vast battles and referred to one campaign as of a "wholly novel character", "as if the battles of today are to be more easily pictured as sea encounters, with places representing merely bases, valuable for supplies and as links in communications, which may temporarily pass out of one's control."

The writer points out that this may to some extent explain the vagueness of the Nazi claims: "The Germans stated a week ago that the occupation of Kiev was 'imminent'. Three days later it was claimed that a Russian counter-attack south-west of the city had been thrown back; and it seems clear that German units had penetrated the suburbs. Apparently the same or some additional units have advanced to the east of the city; and yet, only on Saturday did the Germans claim to have captured Novograd-Volinsk, which lies 130 miles to the west."

Weeks later, in a parody on the Nazi communiqués, Moscow referred to Kiev as a unique sort of city, whose gates are 150 miles from the city itself!—The Nazis were still “at the gates of Kiev,” 150 miles away!

By the end of the sixth week Moscow claimed that the Germans had suffered 1,000,000 casualties in dead, wounded and prisoners, against 600,000 Russians. Berlin Radio, faced with a failure to achieve any of the main objectives set for the first four weeks of the fighting—Leningrad, Kiev and Smolensk within a week, Moscow within at least a month—had to admit the effectiveness of the Red Army tactics of defence in depth as already described: “The peculiar tactics employed by the Soviet defence requires that the German Headquarters should also change its tactics.” A reporter from the front says: “However footsore our soldiers may be, they must remember how important it is to carry out the orders of the High Command. Unless the infantry follows up quickly the advance of our tank units, no decisive results can be achieved.”*

Field-Marshal Lord Milne, summing up the campaign to date, on the eve of the Nazi's third offensive, wrote as follows:† “Russia can face the commencement of the third stage with confidence, knowing that already many of the best German fighting units have been roughly handled, and cannot be too anxious to continue the assault, that their own position is better than it was at the beginning, and must be daily improving, and that the tactics they have adopted so far have proved successful.” Two days later a Special Correspondent of *The Times* confirmed this view: “The dexterity of the Russians in evading fatal entanglements suggests that unless they make any serious tactical mistakes they will be able to keep the struggle on its present footing of a free fight for a considerable time, especially as they do not seem to have difficulty in maintaining their supplies and reinforcements.”

Thus, six weeks after the invasion began, the Red Army was still intact, still fighting with a magnificent spirit, still well supplied, and still using the strategy of defence in depth, by which the panzer divisions were continually being cut off from the supporting infantry.

* Quoted in *Daily Telegraph*, 2nd August, 1941.

† *Sunday Chronicle*, 3rd August, 1941.

But what of the Red Air Force in all these battles? "The Red Air Force continues to give the army powerful support. It has struck devastating blows at the German tank formations and mechanised columns," wrote the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent.*

On two occasions the Nazis claimed that the Russian Air Force had been annihilated. The second occasion was August 8th, when the German News Agency announced: "The German Air Force has now eliminated the greater part of the Red Air Force, and the remaining Russian planes avoid battle as far as possible."

As if in reply to this, the first Red air raid on Berlin took place at once. Imagine the embarrassment of the Nazi propagandists! For two days they refused to admit that the planes came from the Soviet Union, and then, finally, and very reluctantly, they had to face the fact that the Red Air Force, after all, was very far from being dead. The Air Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* paid the following tribute to the Soviet raid on Berlin:

"The Russians have achieved one of the greatest operational feats of the present war. The raid was made from bases and under conditions which made the flight to Berlin rather more difficult than it is for the R.A.F."†

At the front, and in its raids on Berlin, the Red Air Force has proved its worth. But even more sensational, in comparison with the experience of other European cities, has been the Soviet resistance to the Nazi raiders.

We have already, in the previous chapter, seen something of the part played by the civilian population in the Soviet Union against the incendiaries dropped by the Nazi raiders. But mention must also be made of the A.A. defences of the Soviet cities. Here is the comment of the Air Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*:

"Once more, on Monday night, the Russians succeeded in setting up a very effective defence against enemy night bombers attempting to raid Moscow. Evidently they have developed an extremely effective night interception system.

* 2nd July, 1941. † 9th August, 1941.

"Night interception is the most difficult form of air defence, as we have learned in this country. It requires an elaborate instrument system and a highly complex organisation. It was not expected that Russia, whatever the size and technical merits of her air force, would be able to offer strong resistance to the German night attacks."

Or again, the correspondent of the *News Chronicle* on the spot:

"First prize goes to the searchlight men. They were magnificent. Almost as soon as they switched on their immensely powerful beams—more powerful, I would say, than London's—they picked up the bomber and held it there till either it had been shot down or flown out of range.

"There was no lack of searchlights either, and all night long the crews worked with admirable precision."

The above comments were based on the experience of Moscow. But Leningrad's achievement was even more sensational. During the first two months of the Nazi attack, in spite of the fact that this city was not more than 100 miles from the frontier, not a single Nazi raider was able to get through to the city, though as many as ninety planes attempted to break through in a single raid.

During the last ten days of July alone the Nazis attempted seventeen raids on the city, all of which were failures.

Summing up the experience of the first twenty days of the war, one of the Red Air Corps Commanders, Stepanov, contrasted the relative strengths of the Red and Nazi Air Forces. He commented on the fact that in the German Air Force many of the men were extremely raw. Among the captured German airmen were many youngsters with but little experience.

The heroism of the Soviet pilots has been illustrated by a number of reports of their exploits, among which two of the most striking in the early weeks of the war were those of Lieut. Zdorovtsev and Lieut. Kharitonov, both awarded the highest honour, Hero of the Soviet Union, for their valour.

Junior Lieutenant Zdorovtsev fought on until his ammunition was exhausted, in a battle against enemy bombers. After this he rammed a German bomber with his plane, causing

it to crash with its crew, and Zdorovtsev was able to land his own plane without any serious damage to himself.

Junior Lieutenant Kharitonov was pursuing a bomber, and flew deliberately into its tail, knocking the tail elevators off, causing the bomber to crash. Lieutenant Kharitonov then brought his own fighter safely to land.

Of the acts of heroism of the Red pilots to date, however, perhaps the most outstanding is that of the bomber pilot who, faced with the necessity for a forced landing on enemy territory, deliberately nose-dived into an oil dump, causing serious explosions to take place.

A word must, in conclusion, be said of the exploits of the Red Navy which, since the war started, has carried out extensive work both in the Baltic and the Black Sea. Here is a summary of the Red Navy's achievements up to the sixth week, as reported by Academician Ivanov in *Soviet News* :

"On the very first day of the war the Soviet Navy sank several enemy submarines in the Gulf of Finland. At the same time Soviet aircraft successfully bombed Memel. Two more enemy submarines were sunk on June 26th as a result of combined operations by aircraft and light craft. A submarine was sunk in the Gulf of Riga on June 27th. Three days later a decisive attack by Soviet forces destroyed an enemy landing party in the direction of Viborg.

"On June 15th a German submarine was hit by a mine in the Gulf of Finland. Another submarine suffered the same fate in the Varanger Fiord.

" . . . On July 12th a German fleet of troop-carriers and tankers, convoyed by a strong formation of destroyers, patrol-ships, torpedo-boats and fighter planes, was discovered in the Baltic. Action by Soviet warships, Air Forces and coastal defences sank two destroyers and a tank-carrying barge; one other destroyer was heavily damaged. The Soviet forces did not lose a single ship or plane.

"A few days later reconnaissance planes discovered another heavily guarded convoy of enemy transports in the Baltic. Combined action by planes, torpedo boats and destroyers

sank eleven enemy troop-carriers, ships carrying artillery, tanks and ammunition, and one tanker.

"On July 20th Soviet planes sank another German destroyer. Six days later two enemy destroyers, one submarine and two fuel ships were sunk by the Baltic Fleet and Air Arm; one patrol ship was crippled. On July 28th the Soviet Fleet Air-Arm sank a German ammunition ship and a barge which were heading for a Finnish port. A destroyer and two patrol ships were sunk by coastal batteries—the Soviet Fleet losing one destroyer. The Soviet Air Force also bombed a Finnish battleship belonging to the coastal command.

"On July 31st the Air Force, operating in the Baltic, sank one enemy destroyer and inflicted considerable damage to two others. On August 2nd another destroyer and one transport were sunk and two destroyers and one transport damaged.

"In the Black Sea powerful blows were inflicted by the Soviet Air Force and Fleet on Constanza and other enemy naval bases. At least two submarines, one destroyer, and several river monitor-ships were destroyed."

Subsequent reports tell of landings made on islands in the Gulf of Finland in the neighbourhood of Hango, the Soviet "Gibraltar," which successfully withstood attack both from land and sea. They also tell of successful landings on islands in the Danube Delta, and of the destruction of a Nazi landing party in the Southern Ukraine. Thus the Red Navy has not fallen behind the high standard set by the Red Army and Air Force.

The forces of the Red Army, Air Force and Navy have dealt a series of sharp surprises, not only to the Nazis, but to critics in other countries too. But however great their achievements, these would be far less than they have been, if it were not for the stubborn struggle of the armed people behind the Nazi lines. This struggle has proved to be one of the greatest innovations of Soviet strategy—The "scorched earth" policy of Stalin has won the respect of the world.

CHAPTER VII

GUERILLAS SCORCH THE EARTH

THE reader is asked seriously to study and to compare the following extracts from official instructions:

From Stalin's speech, July 3rd, 1941:

"In the case of a forced retreat by Red Army units, all rolling stock must be evacuated, the enemy must not be left a single engine, a single railway car, not a single pound of grain or gallon of fuel. Collective farmers must drive off all their cattle and turn over their grain to the safe keeping of the State authorities for transportation to the rear. All valuable property, including non-ferrous metals, grain and fuel which cannot be withdrawn, must be destroyed without fail.

"In areas occupied by the enemy, guerilla units, mounted and on foot, must be formed; diversionist groups must be organised to combat the enemy troops, to foment guerilla warfare everywhere, to blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph lines, set fire to forests, stores and transports. In the occupied regions conditions must be made unbearable for the enemy and all his accomplices. They must be hounded and annihilated at every step and all their measures frustrated."

From an appeal by Marshal Budenny, August, 1941:

"Men and women of the territory occupied by the German Fascists! We call upon those of you who can bear arms to join the guerilla detachments, crush the hated German troops, destroy the Fascists. Wreck their trains, disrupt their communications, blow up their supply depots. Not a single ounce of grain for the enemy. Harvest only as much as you will require for the immediate future and destroy the rest. The hour of our victory is near. All together to fight the enemy and destroy him."

From the British Home Office Instructions as to what to do in an invasion:—

Extract from Ministry of Information leaflet: "Stay where you are."

"If this island is invaded by sea or air everyone who is not under orders must stay where he or she is. . . . Your order is 'Stay Put' . . . If you do not stay put you will stand a very good chance of being killed . . .

"Civilians who try to join in the fight are more likely to get in the way than to help . . . If fighting by organised forces is going on in your district and you have no special duties elsewhere, go to your shelter and stay there till the battle is past. Do not attempt to join the fight. Behave as if an air-raid were going on."

Extract from leaflet giving "Fourteen Invasion Questions" and their answers:

"With a bit of common sense you can tell if a soldier is really British or only pretending to be so. If in doubt ask a policeman, or ask a soldier whom you know personally."

The above quotations make possible a comparison between the methods of fighting the Nazi invaders adopted by the Soviet Government, Army and people, and the methods proposed by the British Home Office. Clearly, we have much to learn from the Russians.

It is encouraging to note that already, at any rate in the leadership of the Home Guard, the lesson is being learnt. For, on August 1st, Major-General Viscount Bridgeman, Director-General of the Home Guard, issued the following message:

"I want the Home Guard to realise that if a position is overrun that does not necessarily mean the end of resistance. The survivors must re-form and fight on as best they can. I would re-echo the message broadcast to the Russian people by Marshal Budenny. Marshal Budenny said:

"'Join guerilla detachments. Derail enemy trains, interrupt communications, blow up dumps. See that not a single ounce of grain is left to the enemy. Gather as much as you need for the future and destroy the rest.'"

And in a later message* he said: "The Russians have laid stress on the importance of sabotage and similar activities behind the enemy lines. That is a task for which, if invasion comes, the Home Guard will be particularly suitable.

"It will be able to undertake all these harassing enterprises which interfere with the enemy's communications and keep him looking over his shoulders. The Russian campaign is extending our knowledge of what can be done."

The heroic exploits of the Soviet guerilla fighters, and the determined fulfilment of Stalin's instructions on the carrying out of the scorched earth policy have impressed the world, not least, the Nazi invader.

Thus, within the first twenty days of the war, the Nazi radio commentators were having to explain the slowness of the German advance as being due, in great measure, to the stubborn resistance that they were meeting behind their own advanced lines:

"The difference between the Polish and Western campaigns of 1939 and 1940 and the present campaign against the Soviet Union is that almost everywhere and continuously fights with enemy formations flare up behind the lines. These battles have to be fought in addition to the main battle, and although it can be done with the use of reinforcements, it nevertheless imposes a strain on our forces. We find ourselves suddenly confronted with surprise attacks which are very similar to guerilla warfare.

"Added to all these difficulties is the art of the Russians in the use of underhand methods. They are very skilled in the quick construction of well-camouflaged fortifications and positions. But the German soldier is well able to deal with these completely strange methods which sometimes resemble methods employed in civil war."†

And the following report from a Major Meltzer to the Headquarters of the 18th German Tank Division tells its own story. The report was itself captured late in July by Red Army guerillas:

"I inform you that the soldiers in private conversation express dissatisfaction at the shortage of food. It is impossible

* August 15th. † Quoted in *The Times*, 2nd August, 1941.

to carry out your instructions regarding the necessity of getting food on the spot. Counter to all our expectations, the Russian peasants have proved so fanatical that they leave together with the Red Army and destroy their whole property.

"Within the last six days I have lost about twenty and more picked men who were sent on trucks to surrounding villages to get food. Only three soldiers returned out of twenty-three, and even they brought nothing. The rest were apparently killed or taken prisoner by guerillas, who harass us day and night. I insistently request the urgent dispatch of food. It is desirable that the transport be strongly guarded, otherwise it will inevitably fall into guerilla hands."

Another order, issued to the First Tank Detachment by their Commanding Officer, von Kleist, was captured and read as follows:

"Rumours to the effect that Soviet tanks have broken through have caused panic in services in the rear. I hereby order: Whoever initiates or spreads panic will be court-martialled for disobedience and cowardice. In cases of panic officers must act in the severest manner and, if necessary, resort to arms. During alarms I forbid such shouts as 'Soviet tanks have broken through!'"

The Soviet Press has given great prominence to the way in which the scorched earth policy has been carried out in practice. Here is a description of what occurred in just one village, and such stories are typical of the whole length of the fighting front, from the Baltic to the Black Sea:

When it became known in a certain village that the Nazis were approaching, groups of young people emptied the granary, took the grain to the nearest railway station and loaded it into trucks for the rear. The trucks were camouflaged with greenery. About two tons of grain which could not be transported were destroyed.

The milkmaids from the collective farm drove their cows through the fields of growing corn, trampling it down and destroying it. Women cut the corn with scythes, and tractors were used to crush it into the ground. A whole beet field was ploughed over.

Pigs were slaughtered and handed over to a nearby Red Army regiment. The pigsties, stables and a cowshed were demolished. The best horses were driven off into the woods for the use of guerilla fighters.

Agricultural machinery was smashed, the pond was emptied, and the local sugar refinery was wrecked. The supplies of goods in the local shops were partly sent to the rear and partly destroyed. The wells were filled up, and the villagers evacuated the children while the rest went off to the woods to carry on a guerilla campaign against the enemy.

Not only is the work of destruction being carried out in the countryside, but also in the towns. When the Nazi forces advanced towards the oil wells of Drogobych, in Western Ukraine, the workers set fire to them and blew up the refinery. In the town of Lvov all stocks of goods which could not be taken away were destroyed.

But of all the acts of destruction carried out by the retiring Red Army not one has surpassed in pathos, or indeed ever will surpass, the blowing up of the Dnieper Dam and Power Station.

The great Dnieper Dam, with its great power-station—the largest in Europe—was one of the first fruits of the First Five Year Plan, the pride of Socialist Construction.

Today, rather than let this creation of human labour fall into Fascist hands, its creators have destroyed it. J. L. Garvin, in the *Observer*, has referred to this act as an “unparalleled stroke of patriotic destruction”—“the most gigantic act of sacrificial sabotage in the world’s history.”*

The Secretary of the Communist Party of Byelorussia, after six weeks of fighting, issued a detailed report on the guerilla fighting in his Republic. Under the leadership of District Secretaries of the Party, considerable damage had been done by guerilla bands. One claimed to have captured one tank, one anti-tank gun and ten armoured cars. Another detachment swooped on a town, destroyed the German garrison, and held the town until a big German detachment arrived. Another guerilla detachment destroyed a German tank, killed thirty German cavalymen, and burnt 3,000 tons of grain and

* 31st August, 1941.

a fuel dump. In a forest a guerilla detachment discovered the headquarters of a German unit. They obtained reinforcements from a neighbouring Red Army unit, destroyed the headquarters, killed the general, and captured documents. Another guerilla unit ambushed the German infantry. They let the infantry cross a river and then blew up the bridges. They then attacked the Germans, over 1,000 of whom were killed.

In face of such attacks in their rear the German High Command issued an order not to halt in forests, but only in the open. And in the orders-of-the-day of Major Wolf, commander of the 2nd Battalion of the 212th German Infantry Regiment, which were captured by the Red Army, they found the following: "Company commanders must for the second time inform the entire personnel that with the advent of darkness men may be released from the camp only armed and in groups of not less than seven to ten men."

In the Ukraine similar activity is reported by the Secretary of the Communist Party, Burmistenko. The brutalities of the Fascists against the women and girls whom they capture have worked as an additional incentive to the collective farmers to join the guerillas. In one village, where the whole family of a collective farmer had been buried alive by the Nazis, the guerillas were able to kill the German officer, Kurt Kreuse, in whose wallet they found a letter for home which said: "At last we have reached the wealthy Ukraine. But we live, as it were, in a barren steppe. The Bolsheviks have shipped everything out of here and we cannot eat ears of grain."

One device of Ukrainian guerillas was to fit planks with sharp spikes and place these across the roads at night when the German transports were on the move. They thus punctured the tyres of the armoured cars, and then were able to surround them. Another device, used against motor cyclists, was to stretch a steel wire across the road at the height of the rider, pulling him off his machine.

Popular figures are arising in this widespread guerilla movement. "Grandpa," formerly a co-operative employee, is the leader of one such detachment. Already Grandpa's unit has to its credit seven German tanks, a group of enemy motor

cyclists, and the wrecking of telephone and telegraph communication over a considerable distance.

In a village occupied by the Germans, which the peasants had not had time to evacuate, they sheltered and concealed a group of wounded Red Army men for several days, finally smuggling them across the front to territory where they could receive proper treatment behind the Soviet lines.

Other cases are reported of the guerilla fighters raiding aerodromes, thus carrying through activities similar to those of parachute troops. One guerilla detachment, known as the "Falcons," watched a new Nazi aerodrome for many days, planning an attack at a time when many of the planes were grounded owing to shortage of fuel. In one raid they were able to destroy fifteen of the German planes. In another case they surrounded an aerodrome, kept up a continuous fire on the tents of the ground staff, and set four of the planes on fire with bottles filled with benzine.

Another story describes how a guerilla detachment formed of the members of two collective farms discovered twenty Nazi tanks halted in a hollow. Fuel was being distributed from two of the tanks to the remaining eighteen. The guerillas realised that fuel was short, and at once sent scouts to contact the regular Red Forces. In the meantime they laid an ambush on the road about eight miles behind the point where the tanks were stranded. Two German fuel lorries later appeared on the road. Trees were hurled in their path, and the drivers and guards did not even resist the guerilla attack. In the meantime dive-bombers dealt with the stranded tanks.

The stubbornness of the guerilla fighting has evoked a ruthless campaign of reprisals by the Nazis. Cases have been reported of Nazi acts of brutality of the most ferocious type. A guerilla fighter, Samokhin, was threatened with crushing under the caterpillars of a tank unless he betrayed his unit. When he flatly refused to give information, the Nazis tied him and other prisoners to a tank and drove it at high speed through the brushwood. Two women from the "New Life" collective farm escaped from Nazi-occupied territory to the Soviet lines. They described how the Nazis had entered their village, taking

the peasants by surprise. They captured the Chairman of the Collective Farm, tied him by the arms and legs to two whippet tanks, and tore him to pieces before the eyes of the whole village. Then, threatening the whole village with extermination, they demanded that all other Soviet officials be handed over. The peasants flatly refused to betray their comrades. Seven old men were then seized, tied with rope, and run over by a heavy tank in the village square. After this a reign of terror followed, especially against the women and girls. From other villages similar tales of torture are reported, especially brutal, because the Collective Farmers will not betray the whereabouts of their leading comrades.

It is in face of this merciless Nazi terror that the guerilla fighters of Byelorussia have pledged themselves with the following oath:

"I, citizen of the great Soviet Union, a true son of the heroic Byelorussian people, promise not to lay down my arms until the last Fascist on Byelorussian soil has been destroyed. I promise unreservedly to obey all orders of my commanders and strictly to observe military discipline.

"The destruction of our towns and villages, the death of our children, the torture, violence and insult to my people I promise to avenge always, mercilessly, and without pity. Blood shall be avenged by blood, and death by death. I promise to help the Red Army in every way to destroy the enemy, sparing no effort, not life itself.

"I declare that I would sooner die in cruel battle with the enemy than surrender myself, my family and my people to be slaves of bloodthirsty Fascism. Should I, by my weakness, cowardice, or evil design, violate this oath and betray the interests of my people, may I suffer a shameful death at the hands of my comrades."

Millions of peasants, women as well as men, concealed in the great forests of Byelorussia and Ukraine, have sworn this oath with a firm determination unparalleled in history. Day by day they are fulfilling their oath. Daily the Nazis become more fearful of the increasingly powerful enemy in their rear.

And these guerilla fighters are not the poorly equipped fighters of 1918-1921. Nor have they the scanty supplies of those heroic fighters in China who, for years, have gallantly carried on the struggle, though poorly fed and equipped, behind the lines of the Japanese. The Soviet guerillas, with their experience of collective organisation, with their knowledge of technique, and with the possibility of receiving supplies through the assistance of the Red Air Force, are an army of a new kind, more formidable than any such army in previous history. In face of this enemy the Nazis can feel anything but comfortable.

But how comes it that it should be the Soviet Union, alone of all the countries attacked by Nazi Germany, that has been able to carry through the ruthless scorched earth policy, and to organise guerilla detachments on such a formidable scale? *The size of the territory of the U.S.S.R., giving a greater possibility for manoeuvre than existed elsewhere, is only part of the answer.*

Consider the contrast, for example, between the policy enunciated by Stalin on July 3rd, and that of the Daladier Government in France, our one-time ally. Can it be imagined that the Daladier Government, representing the biggest industrialists and financiers of France, including the owners of the industry of Northern France, could ever have ordered the destruction of that industry in Northern France, the main source of income of some of the main supporters of the Daladier Government? In France, as is well known, the final surrender was supported by the French industrialists, as a lesser evil than the mobilisation of the whole people, with the "danger" that the workers of France might take over the control of industry. Shareholders who handed their industry to the Nazis rather than save their own country by mobilising the whole people are not the kind who would destroy the whole of their industrial property rather than see it fall into the hands of the Nazi foe.

Because, in Northern France, industry belonged to private owners, and was a source of their private profit, it was inconceivable that a government representing these owners should

have destroyed their property. For, even now, how many of those shareholders are able to draw profits from their industry, even after the Nazi occupation?

On Soviet territory the land and the industry and the farms are public property. All citizens live on incomes devised from their work. To the worker or collective farmer, faced with the Nazi advance, the whole wealth created from the land and industry of the U.S.S.R. is available as a means of support. In these circumstances, to destroy *this* factory or *that* farm, though hard, though a bitterly cruel sacrifice to those who laboriously developed these very same means of production over the past fifteen years, is not impossible. Every Soviet citizen knows that his Soviet Government will compensate him for what he has lost personally, and that he will continue to be able to earn his living according to his work, and to be fed, clothed and housed out of the vast remaining resources of one-sixth of the earth.

The effectiveness of Stalin's scorched earth policy, then, cannot be isolated from the regime of the Soviet Union in general.

Similarly, with regard to the guerilla fighting. In many of the European countries attacked by Hitler, millions of people did not feel that their own regime was very much superior to that of Hitler. In Poland, to take one example, there was a Fascist dictatorship which, for its terrorism, its anti-Semitism and its national oppression was a close runner-up of Nazi Germany. Under such a regime millions of people felt that their own Government was as much an enemy as the Nazi Government: "A plague on both your houses" was a common reaction. This was also the case, in varying degrees, in the other countries attacked by Hitler. But today, in the case of the U.S.S.R., Hitler faces an entirely new situation.

Here is a country which for twenty-three years has put in practice the most complete racial and national equality known in history. The Nazi alternative is cruel racial persecution. Here is a country in which land and industry belong to the people and are not a source of rents and profits for a fortunate few. Every worker and peasant is ready to fight tooth and

nail to save *his* land and *his* factory from being once again wrested from his grasp. Here, too, is a system that has given the people social security and a rising standard of life, and a Government which, for twenty-three years, turbulent years in the history of the world, has given them peace. It is only because the whole people of the U.S.S.R. feel they have something peculiarly precious to defend, that their struggle expresses such determination compared to that of the other victims of Nazi aggression.

Let those who, for various reasons, had doubts as to the popularity of the Soviet regime among its people, ponder the way in which these people are fighting today. There is only one explanation, as we have outlined above. This is how Philip Jordan has put it in the *News Chronicle*:

"If the Germans, misled as others have been misled for years by dishonestly conceived propaganda, supposed they were to be received in this country as deliverers and would find here an unquenchable flow of Quislings, they have already been completely disillusioned.

"No doubt they will take it out of the Tsarist emigrés and such political scum as Hetman Skoropadsky, to whom they have been greedily listening for years.

"Not only is the Russian an ardent patriot, but he has received benefits from the State he is defending that would have seemed impossible a quarter of a century ago. More than forty per cent. of the population of the U.S.S.R. have been born since the Revolution and are totally unacquainted with any form of existence other than that in which they have been reared.

"Most of the remaining sixty per cent. enjoy a material prosperity they never expected to know."*

Therefore they fight as no other people has fought against the terrific blows of the Nazi military machine.

* 11th August, 1941.

CHAPTER VIII

"MOSCOW CALLING!"

"THE Russians have taught the world two things. One is that they can fight. The other is that they are masters of political warfare.

"Their broadcasts, both to their enemies and to their own people, have a conviction, a clarity and a human appeal which make some of our own broadcasters sound like professors talking through a fog. They address the German housewife simply and directly. They quote, unanswerably, the letters found on prisoners.

"We would do well to learn the Russian lesson. The Ministry of Information, which swells month by month, must really begin to use the power of numbers."—Such was the comment of a leading article in the *London Evening News*, some seven weeks after the Nazi attack was launched.* A few weeks earlier a writer in *The Star*, another London evening paper, had commented in a similar strain: "Mr. Lozovsky is doing a very good job of work. We would like to bring him to the Ministry of Information . . . How we should appreciate such communiqué-compiling here."†

And Beverley Nichols, writing in the *Sunday Chronicle* and other papers on August 3rd, commented:

"At last we have on our side an intelligence that understands how to speak to the German civilian population. The aid of Russia in the propaganda war is, in my opinion, as important as her aid in the military sphere."

The Soviet Government regards propaganda as a vital weapon. But it has never at any time cherished the Nazi view that propaganda is the same as lying, and that the bigger the lie the better. The Soviet conception of propaganda is that it should be scientifically true; that the morale at home will be better if the people can trust their government to tell them

* 7th August, 1941.

† *The Spotter*, 5th July, 1941.

the truth. And it is also believed that propaganda will be all the more impressive abroad, the more it is based on uncontrovertible facts. These principles are the foundation of all Soviet propaganda, in peace or war.

The weapon of propaganda has several uses: At home, behind the lines, the morale of the people can receive untold encouragement from the stories of the heroic struggle of their comrades at the front, of the guerillas behind the lines, of their allies in other countries. And the better these stories are told, the greater their effect will be.

Secondly, at the front itself: The more the soldier can be made to realise the support which he is receiving from his people on the land and in the factories, the more he is buoyed up by tales of heroism of his comrades in arms, and the better the service of news concerning the achievements of allies abroad, the more determined will be his fight.

Thus, propaganda is a weapon for mobilising the people of the home country, for giving them confidence in their struggle against the common foe.

Then, there's the enemy. Propaganda to the enemy soldiers, to their wives and families, the workers and peasants behind the enemy lines, can be a powerful force for disintegrating the enemy's war machine.

True, such propaganda will not have much effect on a people who know what they are fighting for; but it will have all the more effect on a people who do not know what the war is about, who are treated as machines by their rulers, or who have many grievances against the government that has led them into war.

All these factors are taken into consideration in the planning of Soviet propaganda. On the one hand, news is told in such a way as to stimulate the maximum enthusiasm and heroism at home; and at the same time to demoralise the enemy. Any government that sets out to fight Fascism has a supreme opportunity to utilise this weapon of propaganda. Moscow has made the most of it.

To create unity at home, to win allies abroad, to divide the forces of the enemy and to isolate the enemy, these are the aims of Soviet propaganda today.

For any such propaganda to be effective, there must be complete clarity on who is the enemy.

At first sight this statement may seem strange, but we must face the fact that one of the main weaknesses of British propaganda to the people of enemy-occupied territory has been precisely the inability to agree on who the enemy is. Thus, for example, in one speech before the alliance was signed with Russia, Mr. Churchill referred to the whole German people as "seventy million malignant Huns." Such an attitude was also expressed in the broadcasts of Sir Robert Vansittart, and has received considerable support in the correspondence columns of the *Daily Telegraph* as well as in other papers.

In contrast to this, when speaking to workers of the Fire Service in Hyde Park (after the alliance with Russia had been signed) Mr. Churchill used the following words:

Having referred to bombing Germany, he said: "We believe it to be in our power to keep this process going on, on a steadily rising tide, month after month, until the Nazi regime is either extirpated by us, or, *better still, torn to pieces by the German people themselves.*"*

Clearly the two approaches to the German people, as expressed in the above quotations, are contradictory. In Moscow's propaganda there has been no such contradiction.

On the day of the Nazi assault, Molotov made the following statement in his broadcast speech: "This war has been forced upon us, not by the German people, not by the German workers or intelligentsia, whose problems we thoroughly understand, but by a clique of bloodthirsty Fascist rulers in Germany, who have oppressed the French, the Czechs, the Poles, the Serbs, the Norwegians, the Belgians, the Danes, the Dutch, the Greeks and other nations."

In this speech was set the keynote of all subsequent Soviet propaganda: The enemy—Hitler and his Fascist armies; the Allies—the peoples of Britain and America, together with the nations overrun by the Fascists.

The propaganda of the Soviet Government to the Allies and to its own population consists of the following: Information

* *News Chronicle*, 15th July, 1941.

on the course of the battles, presented in a more concrete form than that of any previous military communiqués in the war which began in 1939. The very fact that on the first day of the war the Soviet communiqué admitted the loss of planes on the ground (while British communiqués since the war began have never referred to this question) showed that the Red Army communiqués were something new in honest reporting. At the same time, full details of acts of heroism have been given from the very beginning, names being mentioned, and in some cases even places where this could not be of assistance to the enemy.

Details of war production, of the activities of workers and peasants in the war effort, often mentioning them by name, have added an interest to Soviet reports not yet shared by our own.

The above features of Soviet propaganda have been sufficiently commented upon in our press, as the quotations at the beginning of this chapter make plain.

But the aspect of Soviet propaganda which has received less attention, though in the long run possibly more important, is its use as a *military weapon against the enemy—the Fascist rulers of Germany.*

In this connection, we must consider two separate types of propaganda: Propaganda to the German and other peoples living under Nazi rule; and propaganda to the armed forces thrown into battle by the Nazi and its puppet Rumanian, Hungarian and Finnish Governments.

The approach to the peoples behind the Nazi lines is all the time based on the view that the Nazi rulers are the real enemy. In some cases a personal approach is adopted, in others general information is given, or actual instructions as to how best to sabotage the war effort of Hitler. Detailed news of the anti-fascist and anti-war struggle of the peoples of enemy occupied territory is broadcast daily.

Perhaps the most moving of all the Russian propaganda aimed at the German people behind the lines has been their personal messages to German women, wives of German soldiers. The personal approach allows for the different types of

woman addressed, and there could hardly be a greater contrast than that expressed in the two individual messages to Frau Ermler and Frau Werner which follow:

The first, an ordinary soldier's wife, is addressed in a tone of deep human understanding and sympathy. The second, who from her letter to her husband is shown to be a specimen of the nastiest type of womanhood Nazidom can produce, is treated accordingly. The burning scorn of this message will not only have its effect on other Nazi women, but it will pillory such types irredeemably before their non-Nazi acquaintances.

The message to Frau Ermler broadcast on the Moscow Radio, read as follows:—

"Will Frau Kremer, of the town of Ebenstadt, be called to listen to this broadcast. She will hear something in which she is terribly interested.

"We regret to inform you that your husband, Ludwig Kremer, of the 116th German Infantry Regiment, has died in a Russian hospital.

"He fell, shot through the lung, on the Beresina river, when the Germans made four attacks, three of them lasting for five hours.

"When there were over 1,300 Germans lying dead and wounded before our lines, Russian ambulances came up to help the wounded, and the Germans fired again.

"For eighteen hours your husband was in our hospital, and he died holding a picture of you and your children in the garden of your home.

"He was a good soldier, obviously. He had fought in Poland, and had been in Bulgaria and Jugoslavia. He had two crosses given to him for bravery.

"But we ask you, Erna Kremer, why was your husband on the Beresina, and what benefit are the crosses to your children? Is it right to go into other people's homes, to kill women and children? Ludwig Kremer did not want to do that.

"You wrote him in your last letter that you hoped he would soon be home again with you and your children, and that you hoped that peace would soon come.

"You all want peace and we all want peace, but Hitler doesn't want it. He wants war. Why should women be made to suffer? Hasn't there been enough blood spilt?"

"But Hitler doesn't know this. He knows nothing of the sufferings of a wife who has lost her husband, the sufferings of a child who has lost a father; or the sufferings of the father himself. He has neither wife nor child.

"Now we are giving you this sad news, and you should tell others that enough blood has been spilt. Do all you can. Your husband was a good soldier."

In sharp contrast, here is the message to Frau Werner, broadcast on August 10th:

"Frau Werner! You wrote on July 18th to your husband a letter in which you asked him to stay at the front, but not to look for trouble in the front line, and to think of you and the family.

"You wrote again on July 29th saying: 'I should be glad if you would get hold of a fur coat for me from a dirty Russian Jew. We hear that there are quite a lot of such coats available in Russia. Think also of some material for another coat and other similar things.'

"After a lengthy description of the stylish house which you intend to furnish you wrote: 'In dealing with the Russian scoundrels, it is certainly not necessary to have any scruples. Perhaps you could also get hold of a pair of shoes. Anything you can get will do. There is a scarcity here of everything.'

"We have to inform you that you should count neither on a fur coat nor anything else. Your husband received your letters, but is unable to execute your orders. He has found his death in Russia.

"There are in Russia plenty of fur coats and material, but there are also 200,000,000 people who defend their Fatherland against highwaymen and robbers.

"Instead of getting hold of two shoes your husband got hold of six feet of Russian earth. Nobody of your kind can expect anything else in Russia.

"Your husband was not in the fighting line, just as you had

instructed, but the Russian Army stands not only in front of you, but in your rear and on your flanks.

"You wanted to buy things cheaply in Russia. Instead, you have to pay for all with the most valuable you have. Tell that to other German women whose men are here in Russia."

Besides these personal messages, considerable broadcasting time has been devoted to exposures of the Nazi regime, facts concerning the economic and social realities behind the Nazi façade, the corruption of its leaders, the atrocities committed in its name, and the profiteering and racketeering going on behind the scenes.

More important, however, has been the news, both for the German and for the other peoples living under Nazi rule, of the opposition activities which are steadily increasing on their own territory. In this sphere, no broadcast has surpassed the reading of a Hungarian leaflet, circulated on a large scale in certain Hungarian towns, and smuggled into Soviet territory. This leaflet is significant in that it demonstrates the spirit of the growing opposition movement in the territory of Hitler's allies. But while it was broadcast by Moscow it was soft-pedalled in Britain, demonstrating a certain difference in approach to the problem of raising revolt, in the shortest possible time, in the lands occupied by the forces of Hitler.

The leaflet was introduced with a few words of explanation, and then read:

"Hungarians! The German occupationists and their lackeys have involved our people in war against the fraternal Russian people. Inhabitants of Budapest! On June 25th you heard a terrible explosion. It was the work of true sons of Hungary. We blew up an ammunition dump which was intended to murder our brother Russians and Ukrainians. Inhabitants of Almasfiro! The fire at the oil refinery is our work. We did not want this oil to help kill our brothers in the Soviet Union. Explosion of ammunition trains in Carpatho-Ukraine is also our work. This is only a beginning. Join us, and we shall destroy the German occupationists and their lackeys.

"For a fraternal alliance of the Hungarian and Russian peoples!"

At the same time as there is detailed reporting of all news of disaffection in the Nazi occupied countries, frequent appeals are made to the German people from both individuals and groups of German nationality on Soviet territory. Famous writers, such as Friederich Wolf, author of *Professor Mamlock*, come to the microphone and broadcast to their own people. Messages from groups of German Soviet citizens, such as peasants of the Volga German Republic, are sent to their fellow German peasants under Hitler's rule. One such message read as follows:—

"We German peasants of the Volga German Republic, have built up a happy and prosperous life. We do not feel the burden of Fascist taxation, farm foreclosures, hunger, poverty and land famine. This village is one of many hundreds of villages which have received from the Soviet State land for perpetual use free of any charge.

"The war started by Hitler has already resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of German peasants. Now in a fit of madness Fascism has driven fresh millions of German peasants to war against the Soviet Union. All the peoples of the Soviet Union, including us Volga Germans, have risen to defend our native land and our freedom.

"We call on you peasants of Germany to help annihilate Fascism, the worst enemy of progressive humanity. Hitler has forcibly thrust arms into your hands—turn them upon the Fascist usurpers who have enslaved Germany and driven you to inevitable disaster. Come over to the side of the Soviet troops as has already been done by your best men. Overthrow Fascism and win a free and happy life."

However effective the propaganda of the Soviet authorities to the peoples under Nazi rule, even more important of course is the effect it has on the German troops themselves. From the very beginning of the war every statement by a prisoner or deserter which could be used to influence the state of mind of his erstwhile comrades in Hitler's forces was so utilised.

Thus, at the beginning of the campaign, on July 12th, leaflets were already being dropped over the Finnish lines with the photographs of Finnish soldiers who had come over

to the side of the Red Army. One leaflet contained the following message from deserters to their comrades in the Finnish Army:

"Soldiers of the Finnish Army! You are forced to fight against the Red Army. This war is bringing our country ruin and death. Hitler has turned our country into an armed camp.

"What can Hitler give Finland? Nothing but famine, prison and suffering. The countryside is completely depopulated.

"Sons of the Finnish people! Force the Government to reject this bloody adventure and to conclude peace with the Soviet Union. Drive the robber troops of Hitler out of our country, ensure peace for our own people.

"Soldiers of the Finnish Army, go over to the Soviet troops. Don't be afraid, you stand in no danger whatever here. The atrocity stories are told to frighten you; they are nothing but lies. Fight for peace! Clear the Germans out of our country!"

This message was signed by the Finnish prisoners: Corporal P. Siiskonen of the 7th Infantry Regiment, Aarne Heinonen, Toivo Ekholm, Erkkö Heine, of the 7th Battalion, and many others.

Similarly, in German, a message was broadcast, from an aeroplane crew who had bombed London and Paris, and now decided that they had had enough of senseless war.

Or, again, the German soldier, Alfred Liskov, worker in a furniture factory in the town of Kolberg, came over to the side of the Red Army on June 27th, and described frankly how he had planned to desert. He issued an appeal to be broadcast to his fellow soldiers which concluded with these words: "German soldiers! It is your duty to help put an end to Fascism as soon as possible. Turn your bayonets against Hitler and his clique who today rule Germany. In so doing you will accomplish a sacred deed.

"Peace will come, which the German people so desire, and hated fascism will be destroyed for ever."

In order to encourage and facilitate desertion, special leaflet passes have been dropped over the German lines. These leaflets

usually read as follows: "This leaflet entitles the German soldier to cross the frontier to Soviet Russia. Present this pass to the first Russian citizen, commander or Red Army man, and he will accompany you to the nearest headquarters."—Hundreds of soldiers have used these "passes" in deserting to the side of the Red Army.

The effect of such distribution of leaflets on the morale of the German soldiers was clearly illustrated in a speech by a German Sergeant-Major to his men, reported to the Soviet authorities by prisoners. "There are all kinds of bombs," he told them, "but one kind is particularly dangerous, and that is the Soviet leaflet. You must not pick them up, read them, or even touch them. They are poison."

Among the material used for leaflets to the German soldiers, much use has been made of letters from home found in the pockets of killed and wounded. Descriptions of privations at home are read out by radio and summarised in leaflet form, so that such news reaches the German soldier at the front in spite of Nazi censorship.

One such letter, quoted by the Moscow radio, was from a German mother to her son, now a prisoner:

"I often ask myself what they have done to my son. They have made him a Landsknecht, a mercenary who wanders from country to country sowing death and destruction among people. How many lives have you ruined and how many innocent children have you deprived of their fathers? You yourself do not believe a single word of this prattle about the 'country of masters.' Let all nations live as they see fit, for each one has his own concerns to attend to. I would be ever so much happier to know that you are alive and a prisoner of the Russians than to get all these reports about the constant murder and the everlasting worry about your safety."

Another letter, from a wife to her husband, said: "Our little boy is so pale and his legs are like match-sticks. You know I had so much respect for the Fuehrer, but this cannot go on any longer, I am always in tears and I can see no end to this horror."

Behind the Soviet lines are employed a considerable number of German, Rumanian, Hungarian and Finnish anti-fascist refugees, drawing up the appropriate propaganda material for the soldiers of their own nationality. Recently even special newspapers have been published, one an illustrated, for distribution over the enemy lines.

In such an editorial capacity Friederich Wolf is working. As author of the famous anti-fascist play and film, *Professor Mamlock*, he was placed in a concentration camp by the Daladier Government in France, and only finally achieved release as a result of becoming a Soviet citizen. Now, on Soviet territory, he is working night and day on propaganda for the German soldiers.

The propaganda of the Soviet Government, which has impressed so many observers in this country, owes its merit to two main facts: First, that the Soviet Government is clear as to the nature of the enemy—Fascism—and wholeheartedly directs its campaign against this one enemy. Secondly, the Soviet Government, being a government representative of the workers, peasants and intelligentsia, has no vested interests on its territory, either in industry or in the civil service, who are afraid to launch out on a campaign for mass activity against Fascism, for fear of the repercussions which such action by the oppressed nations might later have upon their own vested interests.

Because of these differences, Soviet propaganda to the soldiers and peoples of enemy territory, as compared with our own, is as rich red wine to water. Compare the rapidity with which prisoners and deserters who are anti-fascist have an opportunity to broadcast their message from Soviet soil, with the fact that the British Admiralty, having found that some of the survivors of the *Bismarck* were opposed to the Nazis, kept the fact a secret for four weeks!

Compare the use made of anti-fascist refugees on Soviet territory, in writing propaganda for their own people, with the fact that in Britain Czechoslovakian Communist M.Ps. are held in Brixton Gaol.

Finally, compare the flaming reports of sabotage, instructions how to sabotage, and the Hungarian leaflet, with the milk-and-water of the "V" campaign which may show the Nazis they are unpopular, but which does not destroy munition dumps or sabotage production.

One of the urgent needs of the hour is the fulfilment of the Anglo-Soviet alliance in the field of propaganda in a joint campaign to the ordinary men and women of enemy territory. As the *Daily Herald* has put it: "Our Russian Allies have given us an example of vigour and of initiative in propaganda which we may well take as a lesson, not dully copying it in detail, but drawing inspiration from its energy."*

* 29th August, 1941.

CHAPTER IX

IN HITLER'S REAR

SPEAKING on July 3rd, 1941, Stalin summed up the position of the U.S.S.R., with regard to Allies, as follows:

"In this war of liberation we shall not be alone. In this great war we shall have loyal Allies in the peoples of Europe and America, including the German people who are enslaved by the Hitlerite despots. Our war for the freedom of our country will merge with the struggle of the peoples of Europe and America, for their independence, for their democratic liberties. It will be a united front of the peoples standing for freedom against enslavement and the threats of enslavement by Hitler's Fascist armies."

Thus, not only are the Governments and peoples of Britain and U.S.A. classed as Allies, but also the mass of the people of enemy-occupied territory, including the Germans themselves.

On the basis of this approach, it is not surprising that from the very beginning of the war the Soviet Government should have devoted considerable attention to the development of the struggle behind the Nazi lines. We have already examined the propaganda campaign aimed at stimulating this struggle, and we have seen that Moscow broadcasts have not only given news of what is going on in the different countries, but has actually given instructions on how best to sabotage production, organise guerilla warfare and in other ways to hamper the war effort of the Nazi rulers.

The enormous potential support for the Soviet Union among the peoples of enemy-occupied territory has been pointed out in the London *Star*, where the mass anti-fascist movement in Europe is described as "Stalin's Fifth Column." This is how the *Star* describes the position:

"There is no doubt that Hitler expects a lot from Soviet Quislings. . . . But I predict that Hitler's Fifth Column in

Russia will be dwarfed by the Red revolutionists and their supporters in Germany and German-occupied countries. . . . The political weapon will be wielded by Hitler and Stalin. But while Hitler seeks his Quislings among the generals and leaders of industry—in Russia as elsewhere—Stalin recruits his Allies among the anonymous masses.”*

Now what are the activities of this movement, working illegally, risking the executioner's axe in carrying on the struggle? What is the news from the different countries?

Three main types of activity are reported from Nazi-occupied territory: First, political manifestations of hostility to the invaders; second, deliberate acts of wrecking and sabotage in order to frustrate the Nazi war effort; and finally, the highest stage of struggle, actual armed warfare against the oppressors. Armed struggle has so far been reported from Norway, Yugoslavia, Greece, Poland and Rumania. In all the occupied territories acts of sabotage are on the increase and disputes are arising between the local population and the Nazi occupiers. In every one of the Nazi-occupied countries political demonstrations are taking place in one form or another; from the chalking up of the letter V to the demonstration of 1,000,000 people in Paris on July 14th, 1941, wearing the red, white and blue.

The cumulative effect of such actions, and their development from the lesser to the greater, is vividly described by the famous Soviet writer, D. Zaslavskym, in an article called “Europe Knocking”.

“Europe is knocking. It is tapping out in morse the letter ‘V’. It writes this letter on the walls of buildings.

“This knocking is having a painful effect on the nerves of Hitler's bandits. It is not yet an uprising against the Fascists. However, we know that the uprising in Flanders against the Spanish conquerors began once with knocking. . . .

“Europe is not only knocking; silently and noiselessly sabotage is spreading through the factories of Czechoslovakia, France and Belgium, seized by the Germans. Uncertainty and fear are creeping into the hearts of the occupationists.

* “Night Watchman,” the *Star*, 3rd May, 1941.

"Who is knocking? Nobody is knocking. But all of a sudden in France a train loaded with munitions for the German army goes crashing into an abyss.

"German patrols march in nervous tension along Holland's quiet canals. Who is knocking there?—Nobody is knocking, but a dull splash breaks the silence of the night. Circles spread wider and wider over the water's smooth surface—yet another Fascist soldier fails to appear at the morning roll-call.

"Partisans with machine-guns knock in the mountains of Yugoslavia, whither the Germans vainly dispatch punitive expeditions unit after unit. All of a sudden this knock is heard near Belgrade itself, and spreads panic among the Fascist garrison. Partisans' shots ring out in Poland, where danger awaits the German soldiers in every forest, behind every bush.

"The knock is not yet a struggle. But it is the first sign of life. The peoples, stunned by the Fascist blow, are coming round. The struggle is flaring up in different corners of Europe. It will embrace the whole of Europe."

Is this wishful thinking? Is it too sanguine a hope?—No, the facts justify it.

Here are just a few of the reports which have come through from the different Nazi-occupied countries since the attack on the Soviet Union. They are typical, and many more cases could be quoted if space permitted:

Norway: Towards the end of July reports stated that people were openly expressing approval of the Anglo-Soviet Alliance. The formation of guerilla units in towns and villages, to combat the Germans, was also mentioned. The Finnish Press began to refer to the spread of "mysterious fires" in Norway. The professional people, doctors and teachers especially, were reported to be in serious trouble with the Nazi authorities through their opposition to the new regime. In a statement to the Norwegian Telegraph Agency the German Chief of Police was forced to admit an increase in opposition since the signing of the Anglo-Soviet pact.

Belgium: In Belgium active sabotage, particularly of communications, appears to have been from the start one of the main forms of resistance to the Nazis. In the period July 1st

to August 8th the following incidents were reported to the outside world: Fires at an oil refinery at Soboken-les-Anvers and at a rubber works at Sevintin-les-Bruxelles. Twenty-four goods waggons carrying metal products at Haine St. Pierre had to be unloaded—it was found that the brakes had been damaged with sand. At the Union Chemique factory at Ostend a generator was destroyed, and the Germans ordered the closing of the factory for fear of further acts of sabotage.

Several reports have reached the outside world of the cutting of telephone lines, at Juprelle, at Fauville, and between Ostend and Calais. At the Merlebecke railway station several locomotives were damaged, and on July 16th and 19th five thousand miners struck work at Borinage in protest against wage-cuts and demanded better food supplies.

From *Holland* it has been reported that, owing to the unwillingness of men to volunteer, the Nazis have attempted forced mobilisation for the army. Building workers in the south of Holland are reported to have refused to "volunteer" for the German army even under threat of dismissal.

In *France* the demonstration in Paris on July 14th appears to have been the most sensational expression of opposition since the Nazi occupation. The working-class organisations, including the Communist Party, called for demonstrations under the national flag of France and the singing of the "Marseillaise."

The results were beyond all expectations, with a million people pouring into the streets, wearing tricolour badges in spite of police prohibition. German machine-guns were paraded in the boulevards on motor cars, but only at the Richelieu Drouot underground station did the police and German soldiers actually succeed in dispersing the demonstrators.

Reports of wrecking and sabotage are on the increase. At St. Jean-de-la-Bretagne a freight train was derailed, destroying fifteen oil tanks. In St. Paul-de-Tarnoise six goods waggons were reported destroyed. In St. Pierre-de-Corps the dispatch of 200 waggons of supplies for the Germans was seriously delayed. The axle-bearings were found to have been put

out of order. In Saint-Ouen 6,000 litres of lubricating oil for the Nazis were reported destroyed.

The Paris Prefect of Police, according to a report at the end of July, offered a reward of 20,000 francs for the betrayal of those who wrecked a troop train. Eight Nazi officers and many soldiers were killed. The Nazi troops rounded up a large number of French citizens for possessing firearms.

Handbills of the texts of Stalin's July speech and of the Anglo-Soviet Pact were immediately circulated illegally, and at least three men and one woman were shot for posting them up in public places.

It is natural, however, that the most effective, most stubborn and most intense struggle against the Nazis should have come from the Balkan countries and Poland, where the national sympathies of the Slav populations have always leaned towards Russia. The organising of a Slav Conference in Moscow, condemning pan-Slavism as pernicious racialism, but calling for Slav unity in the struggle for common liberation against a common foe, is a landmark in the stimulating of this joint struggle of the Slav nations.

News from the Slav countries shows that the struggle has been steadily developing, and that the Nazi invaders find it increasingly difficult to keep control in the countries already occupied.

Jugoslavia: The conquest of Yugoslavia by the Nazis never has been complete. Guerilla fighting continued stubbornly even after the Government had fled, railway lines were torn up, and sabotage began in industry. In the Serbian town of Yagodina street fighting was reported in the middle of July, while in the village of Mutnitsa guerilla detachments attacked the occupationists for eighteen hours. So great was the number of German soldiers killed by the population that a German poster was displayed stating: "A Hundred Serbs will be shot and hanged for Every German Killed."

At Snezerovo, where there were 2,000 German soldiers quartered, the powder magazines of one of the fortresses were blown up. In Belgrade slogans like "Long live the Soviet Union!" and "Down with Hitler!" appear regularly on the walls,

and one of the most sensational exploits of the guerilla fighters was when they actually entered the capital, according to a report from Ankara of July 28th, and attacked the Nazis, with the support of the townspeople. According to the report, 122 people were shot after this revolt, and the city was collectively fined a sum equal to about £500,000. In Mostar, Herzegovina, 5,000 inhabitants clashed with Italian troops on the day of national holiday. After this they fled to the mountains and joined up with the guerillas.

Leaflets are appearing in the towns, issued by the guerilla fighters, one of which reads as follows: "In the mountains of Yugoslavia we are daily increasing the guerilla movement, and the hour is near when the patriots of the whole country will throw out the German, Italian and Hungarian invaders. . . .

"To arms, Brothers! We shall develop a fearless guerilla warfare. In the name of the Fatherland, in the name of the fraternity of the Slav peoples, in the name of the liberty and honour of our country, take the difficult but the only true and victorious road—the road to the destruction of Hitlerism!"

The guerilla movement is becoming able, in the course of its struggle, to build up its own stocks of arms from those captured from the enemy, rather as the Chinese Red Armies had to do in the bitter period of internal strife from 1927 till 1936. Thus, early in August there came the following report: Two battalions of German-Croatian regular troops were attacked by guerillas and completely smashed. The Fascists lost about 240 soldiers and officers. The guerillas captured five light mountain guns, two anti-aircraft installations, seven machine guns, nearly 200 automatic rifles and sub-machine guns, and 20,000 rounds of ammunition. Later, using captured arms, they brought down three Nazi planes.

A Nazi unit is reported to have taken three days to travel from Zagreb to Novsk, because the single-line railway was torn up in twelve different places by guerilla fighters, who fired on the Nazis each time they started repairing the line.

In Montenegro the setting up of an anti-Fascist Government of "free unoccupied territory" was reported on August 20th in the British Press.

In *Poland*, as in *Jugoslavia*, the brutal military conquest of the Nazis stimulated the greatest feeling of bitterness among the population. And the conditions imposed by the Nazis, not only on the Jews, but on the Polish population, made life well-nigh intolerable. In *Warsaw* the Jewish population was allowed 750 grams of bread weekly. Sugar, tea, meat and many other foods had become practically unobtainable. The Jews were subjected to compulsory sterilisation, and medical attention was refused to those under three and over sixty. Nazi soldiers have shot Jewish and Polish citizens in the streets for the very slightest of "offences."

No wonder, then, that political opposition grows. On July 20th the German police caught a working man called Zubritsky putting up anti-Fascist posters in the outskirts of *Warsaw*. He got away from them with the help of the residents of neighbouring houses. The Nazis then rounded up about fifty people and sent them to concentration camps.

In a recent appeal the "Association for Liberation from the Hitlerites" said: "The war against the Nazi invaders is not finished. Now, when Hitler is preoccupied with war against the Soviet Union the position of the forces occupying *Poland* is more vulnerable. Everyone must behave like a soldier at the front, and, wherever possible, cause damage to the enemy—burn and destroy, mercilessly kill the occupiers of the country. Tyrants must be resisted by their own weapons. The Germans should be terrorised by every means and kept in constant fear for their skins."

A report at the end of July described the wrecking of a troop train near *Warsaw*, killing 200 Nazi soldiers, when a goods train crashed at full speed into its rear. Many railwaymen were arrested. Within ten miles of *Dembice* guerillas derailed a troop train carrying a cavalry unit. The guerillas killed about 200 Nazis and captured 180 horses, ammunition and food. The German Press in *Poland* has been full of reports of the "sudden death" of S.S. men as a result of "hostile action." A Fascist newspaper, *Krakauer Zeitung*, has had to admit that the "guerilla movement is considerably larger than we suppose."

An illegal radio station is now broadcasting in Poland.

Three European countries, bordering on the U.S.S.R. and nominally independent, are at war with the Soviet Union as the Allies of Germany. These countries are *Rumania*, *Hungary* and *Finland*. From the armies of all three desertions to the Red Army began to take place in the first days of the war. Behind the lines unrest has steadily been growing, particularly in Rumania, where the Antonescu regime never had much support within the country.

Already, at the beginning of July, reports from Ankara stated that demonstrations had taken place in a number of towns and villages against the war on the Soviet Union. Parts of the army appear to have deserted at the very beginning of the war and to have formed guerilla detachments. Two troop trains were reported by an American correspondent to have been derailed on July 9th, between Bucharest and Jassy, leading to the death of 200 soldiers and the destruction of twelve planes which were on the train. A report later in the month stated that the Nazis had ordered the shooting of 500 women in Galatz, on the border of Bessarabia, in revenge for an armed uprising by the local population. Great dissatisfaction was caused by the Nazi ban on parcels to soldiers at the front.

In the middle of July it was reported that the Nazis had threatened the death penalty to all who were guilty of wrecking or terrorism. From the Ploesti oil fields came reports of mass arrests of workers who refused to co-operate in extinguishing the fires caused by Soviet air raids.

We have, in the last chapter, read that magnificent and dramatic appeal issued in leaflet form in *Hungary*. Hungary was one of the first countries to be brought "peacefully" into the Axis, but nevertheless the opposition movement has steadily gained in strength. The Hungarian Government is faced with the problem of recently acquired national minorities on its territory which form a spearhead in the movement of revolt. For example, in Carpatho-Ukraine, acquired from Czechoslovakia at the time of the carve-up of that country, a letter signed by seventy-five members of the National movement was sent to the Soviet Union, as follows:

"The Ukrainians of Carpatho-Ukraine have suffered a great deal at the hands of the German occupationists and the Hungarians. The persecution against us started immediately after the Germans dismembered Carpathian Ukraine from Czechoslovakia and handed it over to the Hungarian Fascists. Thousands of peasants and persons who held even minor positions under the Czechoslovakian Government were thrown into concentration camps, where many of them were killed. . . . Since Hungary's entry into the war against the Soviet Union, our irregulars have destroyed twenty-seven German and Hungarian aeroplanes at aerodromes. They have burned nine petrol dumps and have blown up several trains. . . . We consider our country is territory referred to by Stalin as being temporarily occupied."

The poverty in Hungary, ever since the country came under Axis domination, has steadily worsened. Vast supplies of agricultural stocks were taken to Germany, leaving the peasants who produced them to fend as best they could. At the same time, not only are the Ukrainians of the Carpathians, but also the Serbs annexed from Yugoslavia, proving a thorn in the flesh of the Hungarian rulers.

Serious unrest has been reported from the workers on the estate of Count Esterhazy. They struck for better conditions, and the police were called in to arrest the leaders. The peasants everywhere are said to be hiding their grain to prevent it being confiscated for the use of the Nazis. The result is that punitive expeditions are sent to scour the countryside for supplies. In the town of Pech the following slogan appeared on trains loaded with grain for export: "Not a single kilo of grain for the cursed Nazis. Bullets instead of bread!"

In the case of *Finland* the people have been forced into their second war against the U.S.S.R. within eighteen months. And at a time when poverty was already widespread. According to news received through Norway during July, guerilla detachments had already appeared in Finland and were harassing the Nazi lines. According to the report, one attack led to the destruction of fifteen lorries of food and ammunition.

Two countries which were the first to fall to the Nazis, and where the Governments surrendered without a struggle, are Austria and Czechoslovakia. In *Austria* the news of Stalin's speech of July 3rd is reported to have been passed from hand to hand, while a marked increase took place in the chalking of anti-Fascist slogans on the walls of buildings. From *Czechoslovakia* came reports of the destruction of supplies: On July 20th an ammunition train from the Skoda arms works was blown up, arrests took place on a large scale of workers at the munition plants in Mlada-Boleslav, Brno and Greatz-Kralov, on charges of holding up production, delaying repairs and producing faulty materials. Walls in Prague and other towns were posted with the full text of the Soviet-Czech Alliance.

From two other countries has come news of a growing struggle against the Axis: From *Bulgaria*, a country with a Slav population, intensely friendly to Russia, which is one of Hitler's "peaceful" conquests; and from *Greece*, which was one of Hitler's bloodiest conquests.

Reports from *Bulgaria*, immediately after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, stated that sympathy for Russia was being everywhere openly expressed, in literature and periodicals, in theatres and cinemas, in bars and cafes. Travellers arriving at Istanbul at the end of July said that the soldiers were more and more openly expressing their support for the Soviet Union, that they did not believe in the pro-Nazi reports of the war, that demands for demobilisation were coming increasingly from the soldiers, and that the authorities were afraid to issue live cartridges for fear of what might result.

Reports early in August stated that the peasants, in order to resist the grain-requisitioning policy of the Government, were organising armed detachments to defend their supplies. The Fascist Youth were making house-to-house searches in the villages. Sabotage was spreading, and labour productivity seriously falling in the iron and steel mills. In the one town of Skoplie 140 members of the Friends of the Soviet Union Society were arrested, but the population staged a public demonstration of protest before the German headquarters and the Bulgarian authorities.

In the case of *Greece*, where certain units of the army never gave up the struggle after the Nazi invasion, refugees reported the assassination of numerous Nazi officers. A Committee of Struggle, formed by soldiers and officers in Athens, had started to form guerilla detachments. In the town of Katerini the swastika flag was torn down from the German military headquarters and the Greek flag hoisted in its place, anti-Fascist slogans were posted up in Piraeus in broad daylight, and when a party of Soviet citizens passed through Greece they received an ovation both in towns and villages. Anti-German demonstrations have been reported from several cities.

Though *Italy* entered the war as the "ally" of Germany, it has become more and more a Nazi-occupied country in the course of the past two years. Resentment has naturally grown as a result, and anti-Fascist organisations have issued scores of appeals against the war on the Soviet Union. A leaflet distributed after Stalin's speech of July 3rd read in part as follows:

"Italians, you have already been fighting for many years. But you have not won glory, peace or bread. You will still have to lay down your lives for the sake of this frantic German Fuehrer's attempt to subordinate all nations. . . . Do we want Hitler to win new victories? Do we want him to win the war against Soviet Russia? Why, then the German Fascists will turn us into slaves altogether. There is only one way open to us—with our Russian brothers."

Reports from Austria during August stated that the Nazis were replacing their own troops by Italians, and that the Italians, feeling themselves also to be to some extent the victims of Nazi policy, were treating the Austrians more or less as fellow victims. These reports stated that now, for the first time since the Nazi occupation, foreign radio broadcasts were being openly listened to, and that the Italians were not interfering with this.

And so we see that all is not well in Hitler's rear. But if this is the position in Nazi-occupied territory, what of Nazi German itself?

Let us here take up the story as told by the many German prisoners captured by the Red Army, who have frankly discussed with the Russians the situation in their country. The pictures given in letters to the German soldiers from home, much used in the Soviet propaganda broadcasts, are also instructive as to the outlook of the ordinary people under Hitler's rule.

From the very first days of the war German airmen and soldiers have deserted to the side of the Red Army. On many of them, and also on many of the dead, are to be found letters from home.

A clergyman, in a letter to a school-teacher at the front wrote on June 8th: "When I prayed together with the children for their fathers and boys at the front, the church resounded with the sobs and crying of my congregation."

A letter from Private Karl Kraft to his father was found in material captured. It ran as follows: "Formerly I tried not to think of anything, and blindly obeyed all orders. I became an automaton, with which anything could be done. But I have no more strength to continue this devastation. The month of war on the eastern front has taught me a lot. I realise that the war with R. will end badly for us. We have already half lost it." The censor had commented on this letter: "Hand over to the court. There is sufficient evidence."

A letter found on an N.C.O., Willi Mantzel, was already written by his mother before the attack on the Soviet Union. It said: "I hope that this evil war will come to an end soon, and this wish is shared by every mother and every father."

Amalia Grenz, in the early part of July, wrote to her husband the following: "Every day things are becoming more difficult. Pretty soon only a bundle of nerves will be left to me. It is so long since we ate a square meal. Bread and potatoes are delicacies which we eat twice a week. My mother says that now it is worse than it was during 1916 and 1917. Mathilda received a parcel with food from abroad, but we did not have a chance to use it. An S.S. officer came to our house and said: 'You have received a parcel from abroad and I shall take it for the Winter Help Fund.'"

Many of the prisoners, when interviewed, expressed a desire to end the war, and emphasised their lack of belief in the possibility of victory. Private Elksnat, of East Prussia, son of a farm labourer, said he thought ninety-nine per cent. of the German people were afraid to say what they thought. Corporal Etswaler, thirty-four years old, said: "The soldiers say that they are being driven to war for the third time, and that they are fed up with it."

The above quotations, typical of many more, do not have the same significance as the formation of guerilla detachments, or the blowing up of ammunition dumps. It seems clear that, hitherto, the anti-Nazi movement has been developing more strongly in the Nazi-occupied territory than in Germany itself. But this is quite natural, for it is the defeated peoples who feel the heaviest oppression, whereas, so far, Hitler has been able to offer victory after victory in compensation for the material sacrifices demanded of the Germans.

The large number of desertions to the side of the Red Army, and the tone of prisoners' comments and their letters, show that an awakening is taking place. And once the German people, always efficient at organisation, begin to organise the downfall of Hitler, his life will not be worth living.

To stimulate this downfall, defeats must be inflicted on three fronts: On the Russian front, on the Western front, and in the occupied territories of the rest of Europe. The strengthening of the struggle on all three of these fronts is absolutely essential to the speedy overthrow of the Nazi regime.

CHAPTER X

WAR ON THREE FRONTS

W E have already seen that Hitler is at war on two fronts: On the Eastern Front the greatest battles in military history have been taking place; and behind the Nazi lines a continuous battle is raging as the oppressed peoples more and more resort to drastic action against their oppressors. But there is a third front for which we, the people of Britain, are responsible—the second military front—in the West.

In a special message to a British newspaper, Maxim Livinov wrote on August 17th:

"While helping each other, all participants in the common struggle must realise that he who gives in time gives twice.

"It is especially important that the fight be waged by all participants simultaneously and with the greatest intensity of effort, not by one after another in turn.

"In all his calculations Hitler counted, and counts, on the possibility of smashing his enemies individually, one after another. Only by withholding this possibility from Hitler can a swift and decisive victory be achieved."*

This view has been put forward not only by a spokesman of the Soviet Union. One of the most striking features of Press comments during the first two months of the war was the unanimity with which, irrespective of party, the British Press expressed anxiety for the immediate creation of a second military front in Europe, and showed its disappointment week by week that no such front was yet established.

Here are just a few samples of the expressions of opinion which have appeared on this vital issue:

On July 20th, just a month after the Nazi attack was launched, Max Werner wrote in *Reynolds News*: "The third major task is the creation of a second front in the West. Conditions

* *Reynolds News*.

are favourable There are many possibilities. Crushing blows could be delivered upon German bases in Africa and Western Europe. A chain of diversions is needed, probably first in North Africa, then in Norway and the Channel Coast."

On the same day John Gordon wrote in the *Sunday Express*: "What is the matter with us? We have been a nation in arms for two years Yet we stand almost paralysed.

"Quite frankly, I think it is an appalling situation.

"Why should this be after two years? The answer is easy.

"There are more boneheads in positions of authority in this country at this moment than at any previous period in our history. We are suffering from national ossification of the brain. And unless we make some very swift and drastic changes we shall rue the day."

Lord Beaverbrook's *Evening Standard* wrote on July 24th: "All our energies must be employed to allow Russia to keep fighting. Neglect no means. If the great Western Democracies fail to sustain the battle in the East, they will confront no longer one strong opponent, but a whole confederation of enemies. The warning is plain. The chance is vast. It will never recur. For the display of our greatest daring and exertion it is now or never."

On July 29th the issue was put even more sharply in this paper's leading article as follows:—"We should be throwing in every ounce that we could give this magnificent ally We should be making open battle in the West wherever we could organise or improvise a diversion. We should be risking our strength as we risked it in the glorious days of Dunkirk, to win the present battle, believing that it would hold off the battle of tomorrow"

The *Daily Herald*, on July 26th, put the question thus:

"Too quiet on the Western Front? Many people think so. There is a fast growing feeling that we could do more to help our Soviet Allies—and thus help ourselves—by battering Germany from this side of Europe."

In the *News Chronicle* on July 25th, A. J. Cummings wrote: "It is our business to do everything that the wit of man can

devise to assist our Russian Ally in bringing about a German disaster

"(The common man) is ashamed to think that Britain appears to be so inactive and doing so little to create serious diversions and to establish a second front which the enemy could not ignore."

On August 12th, the *Daily Express* said: "We must support Russia till it hurts. We must send Russia such supplies that we can ensure that she goes on fighting. Either that or we must create a real diversion, a real war on two fronts."

And in the *Illustrated London News*, Cyril Falls wrote on August 16th: "What are our immediate plans I have no more notion than anyone else, but I am quite sure that it would be disastrous to continue our present policy indefinitely, and I am positive as I have been from the first that this war is not going to be won by bombing alone. Something at once bolder, more spectacular and more effective will sooner or later be required."

The development of the Anglo-Soviet Alliance has been continuous since that first historic declaration of Mr. Churchill on June 22nd. This was followed by the actual signing of the Alliance itself, and Mr. Churchill's personal condemnation of all those who tried to hedge round our new Alliance with every kind of qualification. Then came the meeting of Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt in the Atlantic, followed by the proposal for a Three Power Conference in Moscow, a proposal at once welcomed by Stalin. Next, the events in Iran, where, for the first time in history, British and Soviet troops co-operated to forestall the actions of the common enemy.

Yet, despite all these developments, the Soviet Union was left to bear the brunt of the whole land forces of the Nazis, and in spite of insistent demands in the press, no second land front was created at a time when eighty per cent. of the Nazi forces were occupied in the East. This would appear surprising since our General Staff did not hesitate to land British forces in Narvik and Greece at a time when Germany had all her forces massed in the West for the express purpose of confronting our troops.

At this point, certain facts concerning our Alliance with the U.S.S.R. must be faced:

When, on June 22nd, Mr. Churchill made his historic declaration, this was not entirely welcomed by certain people in high positions in this country. Those who, in 1939, had opposed an alliance with the U.S.S.R. and supported an alliance with Hitler against the U.S.S.R., are not all dead. Some of them are still very much alive. And now that Hitler was at long last fulfilling his promise of a crusade against Bolshevism, some people did not like the idea of Britain becoming the Ally of the Soviet Union.

This was clearly shown by the antics of the controllers of the B.B.C. Russia is not our "ally," but only an "associate," the B.B.C. censors were told, and attacks on Russian past policy were encouraged officially. Russia is not an "ally," but only a "co-belligerent" was the first excuse given for not playing the International on Sundays together with the National Anthems of our less gallant allies. And when Mr. Churchill declared that Russia was our Ally, then the B.B.C. altered its anthem policy.

Again, when the Russian Military Mission arrived at Euston Station, the press photographers were told by a Military Intelligence Officer that no photos must be taken of the British and Russian officers shaking hands—and if they were taken, they would never be allowed to appear in print. True, protests secured the removal of the ban on the personal orders of a higher authority, but the scandal had occurred. And though this incident may seem trivial, it causes the question to be asked: "If this is the attitude of a Military Intelligence Officer towards a mere handshake, what is the attitude of such people in the War Office when it comes to sitting round a table and drawing up a joint plan of campaign?"

Another incident, similar in character, was the statement of Sir Richard Cross, new High Commissioner to Australia, as soon as he landed in that country: The British people "detest" the Soviet system, he said.

Sir Richard Cross is the son of the Secretary of Captain Ramsay's "Right Club."

Most ominous of all, perhaps, was a leading article in the *Economist*; journal of leading financial circles in this country. Seven weeks after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union had been launched, this weekly wrote that Russian leadership in Eastern Europe "raises the question in a number of minds whether, if the issue is between German and Russian domination, the known evil"—i.e. the Nazi regime—"is not preferable."*

This can only mean one thing: That certain circles in the City would prefer a Nazi to a Russian victory. The fact that at this stage they dare to say so openly is a serious warning: Enemies of the one Alliance which has given us the possibility of victory are not lacking, nor are they inactive.

From these symptoms, for they are symptoms, it can only be concluded that certain people in high positions do not at all welcome an alliance with the Soviet Union. The activities of such people will be aimed at minimising the importance of that alliance, at minimising the strength of the Soviet Union, and, as in 1939, at securing some sort of pro-fascist agreement with Hitler rather than continue the war to a complete and final democratic victory.

It is possible that the influence of such people may have something to do with the alarming military inactivity which followed the establishment of an alliance with the U.S.S.R.

But these people could never carry on their obstructive tactics if the vast mass of the British people realised the urgent necessity of action in the West to defeat Hitler in the shortest possible time. And it must be admitted that one very serious obstacle to the creation of such a second front is the fact that many people have a false sense of security in the present situation: "Hitler's all right, the Russians can take care of him," "We won't have any more blitzes while the Russians are fighting"—such sentiments as these are only too common, and result in an attitude of complete apathy towards the successful waging and the rapid winning of the war.

But such complacency is playing into Hitler's hands. What could Hitler want more than that the British people should believe such things, and should therefore remain inactive, leaving him to concentrate the whole of his available forces

* *Economist*, 16th August, 1941.

on the Eastern front? What could the friends of Hitlerism in this country desire better than that such a feeling should be widespread among the population? The Fascists are not allowed openly to carry on their propaganda. To foster the apathetic attitude expressed above is the kind of thing the Fascists will strive to do to their utmost in the present situation.

And such an approach to the present situation is absolutely wrong. It does not follow that, if the Russians put up a good show, Hitler will not launch an attack upon us. On the contrary, the harder he finds it to fight against the Red Army, the more necessary it may become for him to launch an attack on an alternative front. In which case we once more would have to bear the brunt of a Nazi offensive. This is why the warning of Field-Marshal Lord Milne in the *Sunday Chronicle** is vitally important.

"Russia will materially help us to win the war, but she will not win the war for us. The final act in this world-war tragedy must be decided by our own actions.

"Once again the British Army is relegated to a passive role, which may in the near future be turned into a more active one. For, as the Prime Minister has warned us, the period when invasion becomes a possibility is rapidly approaching, and in these days invasion may come from the air equally as from the sea.

"That air attack on this country has for some time been negligible, that our devastating attacks on Germany have drawn no retaliatory action, does not mean that Germany is in no position to strike at us.

"The very fact that the operations against Russia have not come up to expectation may call for drastic action against this country; and the dangers of the world situation have certainly not been lessened by the provocative action of Japan in Indo-China. At any moment our Empire may be attacked both in the East and at home here by the Axis powers."

"The best form of defence is offence"—This is an old maxim of military strategy. Yet, both in East and West, the old appeasement policy of letting the enemy always launch the first blow still continues: Diplomatic relations with Finland

* 3rd August, 1941.

were not broken off by us, though Finland was already a Nazi war base. It was left to the Finns to break off relations. And in the case of Japan, no sooner did the British people heave a sigh of relief that Japanese credits had been frozen, than they read the alarming news that a new barter agreement was just about to be concluded. Finally, while the demand for a second front against the Nazis is universal, they read about the possibility of landing British troops in Murmansk (on Soviet territory!) and that our great European offensive will not come till 1943!

But the matter is urgent. Field-Marshal Lord Milne makes an important point when he says that the very fact of Hitler's failures against Russia "may call for drastic action against this country."

Consider, for example, air raids. We know that, of 200 planes sent to Moscow, only isolated ones got through and more than twenty were brought down. Of 150 planes, again, only isolated ones got through, and more than ten were brought down. In view of these facts, we may well ask: How long is Hitler going to waste petrol in more or less ineffective raids in the direction of Moscow and Leningrad? How soon will he decide that his planes can be more effectively used where the A.A. defences are weaker? How soon will he turn his attacks once more against this country?

The answer is: At any time. And in the meantime it is our task to develop our own defences, to launch our own offensive, to ensure that Hitler will have no more successful raids on Britain than he has had on the Soviet Union.

Or again, consider the military problem. One of Hitler's most urgent needs is oil. He cherished the hope of fighting his way, before the autumn, through the Ukraine to the Caucasus, where lie the biggest oil deposits in Europe and Asia.

But the resistance of the Red Army is proving a very tough nut for the Panzer Divisions. And autumn draws on. There is the prospect of being bogged in Russia throughout the winter without ever reaching the urgently-needed oil supplies.

The question of another route to the oil thus arises: The question of Turkey, Irak and Iran. The joint action by Britain

and U.S.S.R. with regard to Iran proves that they realise the danger. But the important fact which we must face is that if we wait and let Hitler, in his own time, launch an offensive through Turkey to the Near East, then, once again, we are going to have to face the Nazi military machine, and at a time chosen by Hitler.

If, on the contrary, we were to launch our own offensive in the West now, when Hitler least wanted it, we might well create a situation, in co-operation with the U.S.S.R., such that Hitler could never again launch any further offensive in any direction whatever. If we could catch Hitler now in the nutcrackers of the Red Army and the British Army, at a time when a war on two land fronts is what Hitler desires less than anything else in the world, there would be a serious chance of finishing the war quickly, and putting an end, once and for all, to the Fascist menace which has hung over the peoples of Europe for so long.

It is when we see the issue in this light, in the light of cold facts and a sober estimate of the situation, that the need for a second front becomes urgent. And, with a war on two fronts in the military sphere, Hitler would be placed in a yet weaker position on that third front, the front of the peoples of Nazi-occupied Europe, a front whose strength is growing slowly but surely, a front which would leap into action once a few landings of British troops made possible the arming of the people of Norway, France and other Nazi-occupied territories for their final struggle for their national independence.

But to arm the people of these territories, arms are necessary. And the deplorable position of this country at the time of the Dunkirk debacle, as recently revealed by Mr. Anthony Eden, shows that the main factor, in ensuring the country's preparedness, is adequate war production.

In the countries occupied by the Nazis, munition dumps are being blown up, production is being deliberately sabotaged. In our country, a country which is the enemy of Nazi Germany and the Ally of the Soviet Union, the opposite policy is necessary: To put as much energy into production as the enemies of

Nazism on Hitler-occupied territory are putting into the destruction of Hitler's war effort.

The Alliance with the Soviet Union has awakened a new hope and a new confidence in the minds of many working people. Hence the rapid growth in the interest in problems of production among the active trade unionists. Shop Stewards throughout the country are now organising, for the first time in British working-class history, Production Conferences, to discuss how the working people can better contribute to production, and to point out the way in which obstacles to efficiency, which arise where profits come before defence, can be eliminated in the shortest possible time.

The proposal of the T.U.C. to establish working co-operation with the trade union movement of the U.S.S.R. should greatly stimulate this development, since in the U.S.S.R. for twenty-three years the workers have played an active part in the solution of production problems through their own trade union movement.

Individual trade unions, trades councils and other organisations have already exchanged messages and greetings with their corresponding organisations of Russian workers. Numerous cities have officially sent and received messages of greetings and promises of firm co-operation. The most prominent leaders of the Soviet Air Force have exchanged messages with the R.A.F. And all these messages, since they intensify the feeling of solidarity between our two countries, play a significant part in mobilising the common front against Hitlerite Germany.

But the exchange of messages is not enough. The Russians are organising production and holding the enemy at the same time as they send messages. We, on our part, intensify our bombing of Germany. But above all, production is the key to the situation.

It is natural, of course, that in this country, where industry is run for private profit, problems arise such as do not occur in the territory of our Ally. Whereas, in Britain, the claims of profit often conflict with the urgent need for efficient

production, in the Soviet Union there is no such conflict of interests.

Most striking of such contradictions in Britain today is the notorious cost-plus-ten-per-cent. system of drawing up government contracts: If a job costs £100, the Government pays £100 *plus* £10 for the product. If a firm, however, by various methods of jiggery-pokery, can push up the nominal costs to £150, then it receives from the Government £150 *plus* £15 for the job. A system more carefully calculated to subsidise inefficiency of production could not be devised. Yet this is the system under which practically the whole of Britain's urgently needed armaments are being paid for at the present time. It is one of the main obstacles facing the Trade Unionists and Shop Stewards who are today trying to infuse a high degree of efficiency into our war production.

The key to the military situation is production. The key to production is the situation in the factory. The key to the situation in the factory is the initiative of the workers and the extent to which the management will put before everything else—including private profits—the need for munitions and armaments for victory over Hitler.

The demand for a second front in the West cannot be logically upheld without a similar demand for increased production. Britain and her people must put the same energy into increasing production as we expect the peoples of Nazi-occupied territory to put into the job of weakening the Nazi war effort. And both types of activity demand their own particular brand of heroism.

The solution of the problem of production, together with the clearing out of high places those who, because of their fear of Socialism or love of Fascism, are holding up the complete fulfilment of our Alliance with the Soviet Union, are both equally essential to the final victory over Fascism. In achieving both these tasks, the organised working class has a great role to play, as the decisive power in the country at this critical hour.

Everyone in Britain, except those directly profiting from the war; everyone in Europe, except those who are Fascists or

war-profiteers; and in the Soviet Union, everyone without a single exception, have a common aim and a common interest at the present time.

We all want to defeat Fascism in the shortest possible time. We all want to secure peace and, this time, a lasting peace. The achievement of such a peace is impossible without first defeating Hitler. Security for the British people is impossible before Hitler is defeated. Are we, the people of Britain, doing our utmost at this moment to defeat Hitler in the shortest possible time?

CHAPTER XI

WHAT OF THE FUTURE

WHEN Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt met in the Atlantic and issued their Eight Points, the nearest approximation to a declaration of War Aims to date, it was encouraging to note that there was nothing in these aims which was in any way inconsistent with the declared policy of the Soviet Union.

At the end of the last war, on the creation of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, an appeal for peace was launched by the new Soviet Government. In this appeal it stressed the need for a "democratic" settlement, "without indemnities or annexations," and based on "the right of nations to self-determination". Such a peace, today as in 1917, is the kind of peace which will win the support of the Government and people of the Soviet Union. And such a peace would be entirely consistent with the Six Points of Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt.

The practical questions, however, which are bound to arise with regard to the organisation of such a peace are legion. And the peoples of Europe, oppressed by Fascism and Nazism for many years, will demand their say in the Peace terms.

They will be determined to ensure that this time, unlike 1918, there shall be no room in Germany for Fascism again to raise its head; that those social forces inside and outside of Germany who bore responsibility for the rise of Hitlerism shall be disfranchised and expropriated once and for all, so that never again can they menace the peace of humanity. And such measures would receive the full support of the Soviet Government, whose Propaganda chief, A. Lozovsky, has already told the world that one condition for the future peace of Europe must be the complete annihilation of the 300,000 Storm Troopers of Hitler.

The question of the future frontiers in Europe appears today to hold a number of ticklish problems. In the Soviet-Polish Alliance no mention is made of the future frontiers, and in some quarters this was interpreted to mean that the future frontiers would be the old frontiers of 1939. *Izvestia*, official Soviet newspaper, strongly combated this view, refusing to recognise at present any rigid State boundary, leaving such a matter to be settled in the future between the peoples of both countries.

Yes, the future holds many problems: Problems of national frontiers and of political systems and of social organisation. But not one of these problems can begin to be solved until, first of all, we solve the major problem of today, the problem which overshadows all others: Today the world of reaction, of organised bestiality, of oppression, led by the Nazi Government of Germany and supported by the friends of Fascism in all countries, is at war against Humanity. Humanity, with the Red Army and the peoples of the Soviet Union as its most powerful organised vanguard, and including the overwhelming majority of the people of all countries, is fighting back. The defeat of the Nazi regime is the essential first step to the organising of the future in the interests of the mass of the people of all countries.

In facing up to this immediate task, there is much to be done: Everything which strengthens Britain's action in the war against Nazism, everything which brings closer together the peoples of Britain and the U.S.S.R., everything which weakens pro-Fascist influences in high places is to be welcomed, supported, yea, undertaken with every ounce of energy.

And if we face up to these tasks, if we really and effectively throw our weight into the present titanic struggles, if we effectively thwart the activities of all pro-Fascist elements in high places, and if we effectively establish a working co-operation with the peoples of the Soviet Union all along the lines, then our co-operation in war will make even easier our co-operation in peace.

And a peace established jointly with the Soviet Union, with a country in which war is profitable to no man and

everyone gains from lasting peace, will be a peace of a new kind, a peace that will be permanent, a peace which will serve the best interests of the peoples of all countries.

It is this future which the present situation offers us. We must fight for it.

And what is the alternative? Suppose that the British people and Government did not pull their weight in this momentous situation, and that the Nazis succeeded in dealing a series of severe blows at the U.S.S.R., what then?

Then we in Britain would once again be faced by the Nazi onslaught. The achievements of the Nazis in arms would once again raise their prestige in Britain, the pro-Fascist forces would again show their heads, and a Fascist sell-out to Hitler would be again the order of the day, with the reign of poverty and terror which that would mean to the British people.

It is not suggested here that the Nazi regime could ever win a final and lasting victory. The fact that, even today, guerilla fighting is in progress in a number of the Nazi-occupied countries, makes this clear. The peoples of Europe, and above all the people of the Soviet Union, will not live under Nazism without fighting back. Therefore, given military domination by the Nazis of the whole of Europe, the bloody struggle would still go on, there could be no peace and progress for the peoples, the struggle against Fascism could only end in a victory of the Peoples.

Therefore the choice today is this: Either by half-hearted co-operation with the Soviets, to permit the Nazis to conquer further territory, extend the area in Europe under Nazi rule, extend the field of terror, famine and guerilla warfare, prolong the agony of the European peoples. Or, alternatively, to co-operate with the U.S.S.R. to the extent of one hundred per cent. of our forces, thus defeat the Nazis in the not distant future, and then proceed to organise Europe, for the first time, under conditions in which lasting peace between the peoples becomes a practical possibility.

In pursuing this latter policy to the utmost we have a world to win.

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